

EMPOWERING PARENTS TO BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN
THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF THEIR CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this project is to create a model that provides parents, within the New Beginnings Fellowship Church in Indianapolis Indiana, tools necessary to become actively involved in the education of their children. The methodology used to test this hypothesis was a qualitative research method including a pre and post-survey, and a four-week training seminar developed by this writer. The results of the model demonstrated that participants had fresh awareness of parental involvement and commitment to becoming more involved in their children's overall educational development. The model proved to be a viable tool for increasing parental involvement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the New Beginnings Fellowship Church, thank you so much for your love, patience, and unwavering support. It is because of your commitment and concern for a spirit of excellence in the arena of ministry that this work has come to a reality. Thanks to the professional and context associates who consulted with me on this project. Your input and expertise is greatly appreciated.

Special thanks to Jennifer Collins, Caryl and Alicia West, the entire church staff, editors and readers; this project would not have been a reality without your undying support. To all who came along side your pastor to assist me in this project, I am so thankful to the Lord for your heart as well as your hands.

DEDICATIONS

This project is dedicated to first and foremost, my lord and savior, Jesus Christ. It is through you that I live, move and have my being. To my parents, who have made me one of the most favored men in the world, to have their rearing, support, and motivation constantly in my life. Thank you for raising my brothers, my sister and I in the ways of the Lord.

To the New Beginnings Fellowship Church family, thank you for your constant encouragement and patience during this challenging season of study. For a three year old, thriving church in the middle of a building project, your patience will never be forgotten.

And to my best friend, Tara, who has exemplified patience with me throughout this entire process. Who never complained about the times I was away from the home to study and to encourage me to get my work completed, even when I did not want to.

Thank you for being my wife and my best friend.

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INTRODUCTION

Within this country and all of the issues we confront daily, an issue that has been often overlooked is the educational plight of our young boys and girls. With all of the opportunities that we have in today's society in comparison to the lack there of from our grandparents and great-grandparents, we have let our ancestors down with our nonchalant view towards education.

As one reflects on the academic endeavors of our young African American boys and girls of this century, as a pastor and former graduate in elementary education, the writer is being pulled with the concerns toward their educational achievements. It is the writer's belief that a certain level of responsibility for the educational development of these children lies in the involvement of the church as well as the parents. It is with there involvement in their child's education that these young boys and girls reach their full potential within the education arena. It will be obvious to the reader that the writer is very passionate towards seeing young people break the educational barriers that attempt to silence them from making a difference in this world. Juan Williams in his book entitled, *Enough*, states that to reject the value of school will have numerous consequences such as children ending up not learning standard English, not writing well, and, worst of all, accepting the idea of failure. Education was a radical tool of liberation for black people so recently enslaved and purposely denied the chance to learn. To be

able to read and write was a sign of self-determination, of strength. A man or woman who could read was a cut above, clearly focused on leaving cultural and educational capital for their children, even if they had no monetary wealth to pass on.¹

The following chapters will provide the evidence that the black church as well as parents need to become more actively involved in the educational development in our children, especially within the African American community. It is obvious that our children are in a system that is failing them. So the responsibility fall back on the shoulders of the black church and the parents.

Chapter One deals with the personal pilgrimage of the writer to a place where he felt the need for the church to take a role in empowering the parents to become more actively involved in their child's education.

In chapter two the writer exposes some of the literary works and models that assisted the writer as he approached the arena of Elementary Education.

Chapter Three, the theoretical foundation for parental involvement will be discussed by exploring the biblical, theological, and historical foundation of parental involvement and its continued relevance in the African American culture.

In Chapter Four, the writer will discuss the design of the model used in the research. The research method was a pre-survey and post-survey questionnaire. The language was written in a fashion so any average reader can comprehend it. The questionnaire was administered to determine the extent of the parent's understanding as well as participation in the involvement in their child's education prior to participating in development workshops as well as being minister to through preaching as well as interviews. The post-

¹ Juan Williams, *Enough* (New York, New York: Crown, 2006), 88.

test results were analyzed to determine if the participants' mindsets changed due to the exposure of the model presented.

The participants were members of the New Beginnings Fellowship church where the writer serves as Senior Pastor.

Chapter Five presents the reactions to the model presented by the writer to those who participated in the seminar.

In Chapter Six, the writer summarizes the entire model with reflections and conclusions of the seminar.

The Bibliography and Appendixes are included at the end of the study.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The Man and Ministry

It was a beautiful Monday morning, in Mobile, Alabama, July 9, 1973 that young Rev. Michael and Barbara Jackson gave birth to their second child at Providence Hospital. The mother often said that he was considered a special child. He was the only child who barely moved all throughout her pregnancy. She would mention how she and his father would shake and poke her stomach to see if he was still alive. Though the writer almost seemed motionless in the womb, when he was ready to be welcomed by the world, he did just that. His mother entered the hospital at 5:30 a.m. and gave birth at 6:15 a.m. His father saw so many similarities in how he behaved in the womb and how his own brother behaved growing up (sort of lazy and nonchalant) pinning the name, after his brother, James.

It was at the age of three that God revealed something unique about this young boy to his father. He had a strange habit of climbing the coffee table in the house. Every time he would try, his mother or father would pull him down. This continued no matter the place; even at other people's homes. This unusual habit kept happening over a period of time, until his father decided that he would teach him a valuable "southern-style" lesson. So he started climbing up the coffee table at home. Instead of pulling him down,

Father decided to hide in the hallway of the house and wait until he reached the top of the table then give him a good old fashion spanking. With the belt being held so tightly in his hand, he watched the young lad do something that would drive him to a place of prayer and would later drive him to tears of joy. The young boy climbed on top of the table and starting pointing, yelling, and screaming the name “Jesus” in the same manner in which his father would when preaching to his congregation. He would go on and on until sweat was steadily running down his face. After he would finish yelling out Jesus, he would climb down off of the table, lay on the sofa and go fast to sleep. After seeing this happen over and over again, the parents then became certain that they were raising a son with the call of God on his life. It is interesting how the parents never brought this up until after he accepted his call to ministry.

The writer was seven years old when he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and was baptized at the Aimwell Missionary Baptist Church by his father who is still the pastor to this present day. It is remembered so clearly being so scared to walk down the steps of that baptismal pool. When his foot stepped in that icy cold water, he forgot all about his fear. The young man would just say to himself, “It is freezing in here!”

The writer was an average student all throughout elementary, middle, and high school. There were no problems with him developing any friends. He did have some tendencies of developing friends who were behaviorally challenged. He grew up playing organized football and baseball. Though these activities brought him joy, it was obvious that singing was his passion. He had few struggles with grabbing microphones and singing whenever invited to do so.

The environment in which he was raised was drenched in spiritual values. His father and grandfather are pastors. His grandfather recently retired from the pastorate at the age of eighty-four. The writer's great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather were both pastors and planters of many churches in the south. All of what he knew was church. Many wonderful moments were spent at some time or another in church. His mother's father, the late Matthew Thomas, served as a deacon at the church. He was president of the Baptist Training Union (BTU). Deacon Thomas he and his two brothers up every second Sunday evening for BTU. It was there the young man learned to quote scripture and to remember the books of the Bible. That was also the time when "Grand-daddy" would give them all twenty-five cents to buy a soda from the drink machine. Out of all the activities the writer was involved in, none of them compared to his involvement in the choir. From the Children's choir known as the "Sunshine Choir" to the Youth Choir He was known throughout his church as the pastor's son who sings solos. His very first solo, at the age seven was entitled, "I am a Promise".

While in high school, He was part of a singing ensemble with four other young men. They were invited to many churches, family reunions, weddings, and funerals throughout the city. There were times when his father was invited to other churches to preach and he would ask that the young man sing before the sermon. All throughout high school to junior college, he would make average grades except for in chorus. That was the only class that he would make an "A" in. It was his involvement in the choir, and the utilization of his gift in singing that kept him active in the church.

The Need for Change

During the time in junior college, it became evident that there was a need for change in the writer's personal life. His grades were dropping. His relationships were depressing, and his parents were fed up. While driving back to Alabama from Virginia, his parents passed by a Tuskegee University billboard. Shortly after passing it, they looked at each other with the same thought in mind, "James has got to get out of Mobile!" They got off on the exit, headed toward the school, talked with the Dean of the Education Department, and enrolled him. The young man did not decline the offer to transfer to another school. He recognized just as well as his parents that there was a major need for change in his life. It was January of 1994 that he stepped on the campus of Tuskegee University not having the faintest idea that his life was about to change forever. During the first few weeks of school, it would have appeared as though history was repeating itself. The smoking of cigarettes and marijuana continued. The partying seemed to be religious, and his relationship with God appeared to be nonexistent. It was one Thursday night the week after classes started that he, his roommate, and some other dorm-mates were sitting in the dormitory under the influence of marijuana. While the other guys were laughing and joking, the writer started crying. He began thinking about the trust and investment his family had made. As the tears continued falling, he began shouting out to the others who were listening, "I was not raised to live like this!" It was then that the young man began to redirect his conversation from the young men in the dorm to God in repentance, and made the decision to rededicate his life back to God.

Classes had started and the writer's attitude and actions in school had changed. His roommate was not taking this change well. Every Friday night he would get up and iron his clothes for the club while the young man (who initially was his source of transportation) would sit in bed in his pajamas across the room so peacefully, Indian-style, smiling. For an entire month, the roommate asked him, "Are you going?" He would respond, "I'm ok. Enjoy yourself."

During the nights the roommate was out of the room, the writer was praying and reading the Bible his father purchased for him when he was a child. During his time of reading and praying, it became obvious that God was trying to get his attention. Some of the most intriguing things were happening. The young man would wake up every morning at either 4:59 a.m. or at 5:59 a.m. and watch the clock turn to 5:00 or 6:00 a.m. His roommate, who snored terribly, would not make a sound whenever the writer got up to pray. After a few weeks of this, he called to explain his experience with his father. His father, knowing what God was doing his son's life, simply shared, "It is obvious God is trying to get your attention." He also encouraged him to keep praying asking God to reveal the reason for waking him up like this. One morning when he was praying, he made a very bold statement to God. He said, "Father, I am tired of You waking me up like this; just to read a verse, say a prayer, and to return to sleep. What is it that You desire of me to do?" To his surprise, as soon as he opened his Children's Bible, the first thing he saw was 2 Tm 4:2. It simply said, "Preach the Word". The writer then, at 5:30 in the morning, called his father to tell him what God said. Through the continuous visions and mystical circumstances, the young man realized without any doubt that God was calling him to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In May of 1994, he, the same young

man who left home to experience a better life, returned home to preach his initial sermon entitled, “Doing the will of God”.

The Beginning of Ministry

At the beginning of his ministry, the writer met a young pastor, John H. Curry Jr., who is the pastor of the Mount Olives Baptist Church (the home church of the late Booker T. Washington) in Tuskegee, Alabama. For the remainder of his college career, he stayed under Pastor Curry’s leadership. Curry treated him like a son though the young man was only eleven years younger. He was welcomed to their home for supper and other family gatherings. He definitely felt as part of the family. There were also moments when he was given opportunities to preach and teach at the church. God really blessed him to be around a pastor and church family that took pleasure in being actively involved in his development.

Immediately following graduation, the writer enrolled into the Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology of Virginia Union University. With all of the expectation of being blessed tremendously during his time there, he at first went through various measures of disappointments. Richmond, Virginia was not only thirteen hours away from home (Mobile, Alabama), but the only family he knew who were living in Richmond, decided not to be married anymore. There was another family who knew his father and had opened their home to him until he could become established. To his surprise, the husband and his wife started mistreating him to the point of tears. Reality hit home for the young man. He learned that even in ministry, people have tendencies to say one thing and mean something totally different.

Things started to get better for him. He later joined with the Trinity Baptist Church under the leadership of Dr. A. Lincoln James Jr. This was the first time he was exposed to a “megachurch” with an actual pastoral staff. Again, he found favor not only in the pastor’s eyes, but also in the eyes of the pastoral staff. He had opportunities to teach and preach there. This was also the first time he preached to over one thousand people in one setting. It was during this time where the pastor and staff’s involvement in this young man’s development that prepared him for ministry beyond his past exposures. In May of 2000, he graduated from seminary with a Master of Divinity degree. Though the degree was precious to the writer because he was the first grandchild to graduate with a graduate degree, the exposure and relationships he had established were just as precious.

Upon completion of seminary, he accepted the invitation to join the staff of the Bible-Based Fellowship Church as Assistant Pastor in Tampa, Florida. The experience was definitely like no other experience that he had ever encountered. This was his first position as a full-time minister in a church. He was in charge of over ten ministries in the church. He was also blessed to head up the birthing of the campus ministry that is still going strong to this day. It was in Tampa, Florida where the writer was exposed to another side of ministry. Never in his life had he experienced jealousy, insecurities, and negativity at this level. It was definitely a learning experience. Many tears were shed. There were also various levels of disappointments. There were so many moments where he wanted to give up, but God would not let him. He was reminded of all the things that were taught to him from those people who were involved in his past. This was the first time where he was in a place where no one was there to support him. He had to learn the

importance of ministering in misery. He can recall moments while in the middle of his preaching “God is able” thoughts were shouting in his mind saying, “What about me?” He had to become tough enough to handle being abused yet still maintain a joyful appearance for the members who were in need of ministry.

During this season, the writer was blessed to meet a beautiful woman at a friend’s wedding who became his closest friend. Her name was Tara Cox. He was able to talk with her about his hurts and frustrations without feeling like a complainer. She was so supportive. It was not too long after that he fell in love with her. He was so thankful to God for sending him a friend that was such a blessing to him during his storm. He learned that God would not allow him to go through these storms without sending someone with a listening ear. He also learned that leadership in ministry was more than just holding a title, but a responsibility given by God to help grow and develop His people.

After spending almost two years in that intense environment, God saw that the writer’s time there had come to a close. He was invited to preach one of the morning services that Sunday. This was his very first time in very long time that he was invited back to the sanctuary by the leadership because he was once told to preach and teach in Children’s Church for both services and to stay in there. Though this was the first time in a long time that he preached to the adults, it became obvious that this was the right time.

That same Sunday the young man preached, a member of the Eastern Star Church, a fifteen thousand- member church in Indianapolis, Indiana was in the congregation. The brother was so blessed by the experience that he purchased a tape and took it back to his pastor. Four months later, the young man was invited to preach at the Eastern Star Church where Jeffrey A Johnson Sr. serves as the Senior Pastor. It was one

of the most exciting experiences in his ministry. This was the first time he was invited to preach to more than two thousand people in one service. After preaching, Pastor Johnson shared with the writer words of encouragement that were like a breath of fresh air. Pastor Johnson shared with him that he has such an anointing on his life that only God knows where he is headed. After hearing the pastor say that along, with other affirming words, all of the negative, degrading, insulting words that were said to the writer for a whole year and a half did not matter anymore. That experience served as a healthy portion of restoration and affirmation, which allowed him to understand that he does have a gift worthy to be used for the body of Christ. One month later, he received a call from Pastor Johnson with the invitation to become a part of the staff of the Eastern Star Church as the Pastor of Preaching and Development. In January of 2002, the young man relocated to Indianapolis, Indiana.

He had the responsibility of assisting Pastor Johnson in all the preaching and teaching at the church. At that time Eastern Star Church had five worship services and he would alternate with Pastor Johnson in preaching at the different services. There were times when he would only preach one service, but there were times when he would have to preach all five. He felt as if he was being groomed for a mighty work in the Kingdom of God. It was amazing how Pastor Johnson took the young preacher under his wings and became involved in his growth and development as a pastor. He would have meetings with the young man weekly to listen to his sermons and would give advice on the areas he felt were room for growth. The time spent was indescribable. It caused the writer to grow tremendously in the different areas of ministry. It is obvious that the level of

involvement that Pastor Johnson has made--and is making in his life--has caused him to learn more about ministry than what any school could have ever taught him.

One year later, the same woman that the writer acknowledged was God-sent in his life to become his friend, was asked to be his wife. On June 28, 2003, the writer married his friend Tara D. Cox.

After spending two fruitful years as the Preaching Assistant, Easter Star Church decided to plant a church with the writer to serve as the Senior Pastor. Everything he had learned since accepting the call to ministry was put to the test. In March of 2004, the New Beginnings Fellowship Church opened its doors to the Indianapolis community. The young man was challenged in the areas of patience, endurance, and faithfulness. It has not been an easy journey, but he has been able to endure because of the people who have been involved in his life. Being a Senior Pastor and husband has now given him the opportunity to put into practice things, those who were involved in his development, taught him. It has also afforded him the opportunity to help somebody else in his or her growth and development. He had been groomed for this task from his youth and now is able to put into practice the godly principles taught by the influential people in his life. He is now given the responsibility to be involved in the growth and development of a growing congregation.

My Place of Ministry

New Beginnings Fellowship Church, which will be under observation, is located within the beautiful city of Indianapolis, Indiana (the Hoosier State). The name "Indianapolis" derived its community name from Indiana and is the Greek word for

“city.” It is located on the White River. The place is known as the circle city because of the Monument Circle that is located downtown. There is a highway (Highway 465) that goes in a circle that encompasses the entire city along with two major highways (Interstate 65 north and south) and (Interstate 70 east and west) crosses. It is presently the twelfth largest city in the United States by population, consisting of almost 1.6 million people. It is the twenty-ninth largest metropolitan area in the United States. It is also the second largest state capital in the United States. Indianapolis is known for being the most centrally located city.

Indianapolis has much recognition for being ranked as number six on the Best Places to Live and Work in America list compiled by Best Jobs USA.com. The 396 square mile city is known for the Indianapolis 500 Motor Speedway (racing), the Indianapolis Colts (football), and the Indiana Fever (Women) and Pacers (Men) Basketball.

Known to many as “Naptown,” Indianapolis boasts of a diversified economy rooted in the manufacturing, insurance, transportation, financial operations, agriculture, communications, data processing, publishing, software development, and government administration, legal and retail industries.

Profile of Indianapolis

In reference to the Educational aspect of Indianapolis, 81.3% of the city is high school graduates, 25.5% have received a Bachelor’s degree or higher and almost 10% has received a graduate or professional degree.¹ The average age in Indianapolis is 35 years.

¹ *Podunk: The Power of Place*, October 12, 2005; available from www.epodunk.com; Internet.

Around 52% of the city's population is made up of females with the remaining 48% males. Almost 70% of the population is occupied by those 21 years and older. In reference to race, Caucasians consist of 69% of the population. African Americans take up 25.5%. The Hispanic or Latino community takes up 4%.

In reference to households and income, 98% of Indianapolis is in households. There is also an average of 3 persons per household. There are around 353,000 housing units in Indianapolis with around 60% being occupied. The median household income is \$40,000.00 a year. The average income for those between the ages 25 and 34 is \$41,000.00 a year. The average household income for those 35 to 44 years of age is \$47,000.00 a year. The average household income for those 45 to 54 years of age is \$52,000.00 a year. The average income for African Americans is 15.6 thousand dollars a year.

In reference to the marital status of Indianapolis, it holds a male population of 15 and older at 291,000. About 35% of them have never been married. Around 46% are married and living with their spouse. Only 5% are married and living without their spouse. The men who are widowed take up only 2%, and the divorced take up the remaining 11%.

With the female population 15 and older, they are recorded at 322,000. There are 29% who have never been married. Those who are married, living with their spouse hold 42% and 5% are married living without their spouse. 10% of the female population is widowed and 14% of them are divorced.

Profile of Lawrence Township

New Beginnings Fellowship Church is temporarily at the Fall Creek Valley Middle School in the Lawrence Township area. This forty-seven square mile area of land is located on the eastside of Indianapolis. The population is estimated to be around 112,000 people. There are around 2,400 people per square mile. The males take up 48% of the population with an estimated 5400. The females occupy the remaining 52% with an estimated 5800. The average age in Lawrence Township is an estimated 33 years of age. Those between the ages of 25 through 44 take up 33% of Lawrence Township. Those between the ages of 45 through 64 years take up 21%. Those 65 years of age and older take up only 8% of the Lawrence population. In reference to race, those of the Caucasian descent take up 66% of the population. Those of African American descent take up 29% and Hispanics take up only 3% of Lawrence.

In reference to the educational attainment of Lawrence Township, 25% of the Township consists of high school graduates. Those with some college or Associate's degree take up 29% of the Township. Those with a Bachelor's degree take up 23% of the population and those with a Master's, Professional, or Doctorate degree take up 12%. Those enrolled in grade 1 through 12 take up 70% of those currently enrolled in school along with those enrolled in college who take up 15%.

The median household income is \$49,000.00 a year. The households having those between the ages of 25 and 34 average \$43,000.00 a year. The households having those between the ages of 35 and 54 average \$60,000.00 a year.² The households with those

² *Podunk: The Power of Place*, October 12, 2005; available from www.epodunk.com; Internet.

between the ages of 55 and 64 average \$58,000.00 dollars a year. Those, between the ages of 65 and 75, average 34,000 dollars a year.

With regard to the martial status of Lawrence Township, out of the 39,000 males 15 and older, 11,000 of them (29%) have never married and around 22,000 (56%) of them are married living with their spouse. There are around 1000 of them (4%) who are married living without their spouse. There are 680 (2%) males at ages 45 and higher who are widowed. There are also 4,000 (10%) who are divorced.

In regard to the female martial status, out of the 45,000 females 15 and older 1300 of them (28%) have never been married. Around 21,000 of them (48%) are married and living with their spouse. About 2,000 of them (4%) are married and living without their spouse. Around 3,000 of them (7%) are widowed. Around 6,000 of them (14%) are divorced. There also is a ratio of 84 single men per 100 single women in Lawrence Township.³

New Beginnings Fellowship Church

My context of ministry is the New Beginnings Fellowship Church to which the writer is serving as Senior Pastor. The church is a church plant from the Eastern Star Church, a 15,000 member congregation. New Beginnings opened its doors with about 400 people on the committed role. There were 250 people who attend consistently attend on a weekly basis. Most of these people are members of-and involved in ministry of Eastern Star Church. The church temporarily worships at the Fall Creek Valley Middle School auditorium located at 63rd and Lee Road. The auditorium can seat around 600

³ *Podunk: The Power of Place*, October 12, 2005; available from www.epodunk.com; Internet.

people. The congregation utilizes the auditorium for the Sunday morning worship services. At 8:15 and 10:00 a.m. New Beginnings also utilizes the cafeteria for new member orientation. There are also some classrooms used for Children's Church. It is a beautiful place for worship and discipleship. The auditorium has theatre seats with a good arrangement of lighting. They utilize the Eastern Star Church (Fishers Location) during the week for ministry meetings and for their bible studies on Thursday's.

New Beginnings is currently in its second year of existence, and the membership has grown to more than 700 people, a radio broadcast that airs Monday through Friday, and a children's church that averages ninety plus children every Sunday. The membership mainly consist of those forty-five years of age and younger. Those members in the congregation that are forty-five years and older make up a small percentage of the church. It is a majority African American church with very few members of the Caucasian race. Over half of the congregation is married with children. There are a very large number of children at New Beginnings. Those who are single in the congregation are predominantly female, ages ranging from 18 to 47 years old. The females make up 65% of the congregation's singles.

The ministry context engages in motive worship and spiritual openness. Members enjoy contemporary singing, preaching, and teaching that is both convicting and relevant to their current condition of existence. There are also about fourteen active ministries in the church ranging from Children's Ministry to the Senior Saints ministry, which closes the gaps of ministry participation. The church offers a wonderful environment of worship and fellowship.

New Beginnings is experiencing an amazing season of growth in the ministry. First it was spiritually and numerically. Now it's geographically and structurally. In a two year timeframe, the church has purchased ten acres of land that is six miles from the location where they are currently worshipping. The church is moving toward building a brand new 5.6 million dollar worship facility the will be completed in May 2007.

Summary

With the congregation growing and excited about the work of the ministry, many members have been becoming involved in the church, in the needed areas during Sunday worship services. One specific observation the writer has made is that although the members attend and are involved in many church activities, some of the members are discouraged because their children are not excelling educationally like they should and the church does not have any particular ministry in place to meet those needs. Though there is a ministry that offers tutorials, there is no ministry that empowers and equips the parents to do their part in understanding the importance of becoming more actively involved in their children's education. As a result, there are parents who feel that they are being fed spiritually, while their children are starving educationally.

The writer is extremely concerned about this challenge because of his college training in Education prior to receiving the call to preach the Gospel. It has prompted him to challenge the congregation, especially the parents to take a more active role, by ministering to their children educationally. He has been encouraged to create a model that would challenge, train, and eventually hold accountable the parents to be actively involved in their children's education. This will be a blessing to the church, but also a

blessing to the community as a whole to see children excel spiritually as well as educationally. This will also display to the membership how vital it is to minister to our children.

As a product of the many people's involvement, in particular his parent's, the writer has many success stories with respect to the need for involvement during those most crucial years of his life. The writer believes that children, during their grade-school years, are at a pivotal place in their lives in term of their educational future. The writer believes that along with offering services within the walls of the church, the parents need the biblical instruction that will allow them to offer even more support in this postmodern society by becoming more involved in their children's education.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

Social Justice and the Black Church

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts. (Acts 2:42-46, NRSV)

In its definition, social justice seeks after the reality that the rights of all people in one's community are dealt with in a fair and equal fashion. The main focus and target of social justice is the marginalized groups in society. These are the disadvantaged; those people who live in isolated communities should have the same access to necessities as one living in an urban area.

The movements of social justice seem by many in the postmodern culture to be an antiquated and out-dated source of thought. This is definitely not the case. Calling this present generation, who are reaping the benefits of social justice and political activism, to a social conscience is a major challenge. As it relates to social justice, empowering this

present generation to take an active role in the development of others becomes even more of a challenge.

In his book, *Literacy, Power and Social Justice*, Adrian Blackledge believes that one of the major tasks for schools is to teach all students to be literate. When schools respond positively to the literacy issues of their communities, much can be done to reverse the inequalities which are so often evident in relations between majority and minority groups. By involving parents and other family and community members in the teaching and learning of literacy, and by building on the existing literacy's of family and community, schools can act as catalysts in a process of empowerment for children, their families, and their teachers. This can be a positive force in the redefinition of relations of power, and enhancement of social justice.¹

Robert Michael Franklin in his book, *Liberating Visions: Human Fulfillment and Social Justice in African-American Thought*, discusses the approach that Booker T. Washington used in becoming the "adaptive person." Washington adopted a publicly passive posture with respect to political participation and social integration with Whites and identified the economic marketplace as a meaningful arena in which Blacks might advance their causes without arousing suspicious of Whites. Washington seemed to embody the spirit of an adaptive person in his own words about himself.

When I settled down for my life's work near the little town of Tuskegee, Alabama, I made up my mind to do as an individual that which I am striving to get my race to do throughout the United States. I resolved to make myself, so far as I was able, so useful to the community, the country,

¹ Adrian Blackledge, *Literacy, Power, and Social Justice* (Oakhill: Trentham Books, 2000), 1.

and the state that every man, woman, and child, white and black, would respect me and want me to live among them.²

The Falls Church City Public School Board recognizes that the education of each student is a responsibility shared by the school and the student's family. In keeping with their beliefs, the board intend to cultivate and support active parental involvement in student learning by doing the following:

- Provide activities that will educate parents regarding the intellectual and developmental needs of their children.
- Implement strategies to involve parents in the educational process including:
- Keeping families informed of opportunities for involvement and encouraging participation in various programs.
- Providing access to educational resources for parents and families to use with their children.
- Keeping families informed of the objectives of division educational programs as well as of their child's participation and progress with these programs.
- Enable families to participate in the education of their children through volunteering time within the classroom and school programs.
- Provide professional development opportunities for teachers and staff to enhance their understanding of effective parent involvement strategies.
- Perform regular evaluations of parent involvement at each school and in the division.

² Louis R Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader 1856-1901* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1972),vii, quoted in Robert Michael Franklin, *Liberating Visions: Human Fulfillment and Social Justice in African-American Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 12.

- Provide access, upon request, to any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Project Appleseed, known as the national campaign for public school improvement, has an initiative called Leave No Parent Behind which is available for all schools who seek ways to increase parental participation in their child's education, and provides the parents the opportunity to take a pledge vowing their participation. Parents can take the pledge on National Parental Involvement Day on November 15th. The pledge is stated as follows:

As a parent, grandparent, or care adult, I hereby give my pledge of commitment to help our community's children achieve a truly independent future. My declaration of responsibility and commitment to my public schools is stated in these five self-evident truths as spoken by President Woodrow Wilson:

- As Americans, we are the owners of the public school system.
- As Owners, we bear a responsibility to participate in the system.
- Accountability for our public schools, their safety, and its employees and its funding rests with us and the rest of the system's owners.
- Our children's future depends on the improvement of the public schools.
- And this improvement depends on our participation.

Therefore as a parent, grandparent, or caring adult, I take personal responsibility for my child's safety and education and the safety and education of the children in this community.

- I pledge to volunteer a minimum of five hours of my time to my public schools each semester.

- I pledge to spend a minimum of fifteen minutes each school night reading with my child or we will work together on homework and enrichment activity.

The guardians are asked to sign the pledge. They are then required to complete a volunteer profile, which consists of thirty-seven choice surveys of volunteer interests.

Project Appleseed also provides a toolbox, which consist of other resources that can hold parents accountable in keeping their pledge of involvement.

Richard Lour published an article on February 26, 1999 on how to increase Parental Involvement in the schools. He offers up ideas collected from around the country that could help increase the level of parental involvement in schools. The first idea suggested is to connect parents and schools before children reach school age. This idea focuses on the nurturing of the parenting and teaching skills of young parents before their children reach school age. Parents as Teachers (PAT), which started in Missouri, are believed to be an effective program to teach the parents these skills. Lour believes that the best way to increase parental involvement is to make it convenient and social.

Another idea mentioned is the encouragement of father's involvement. James Levine, director of the Fatherhood Project in New York says, "Getting more men involved in the early education of children won't restore the missing father in those children's lives, but it will help replace a narrow definition of fatherhood, a vague abstraction or a stereotyped image taken from television, with a concrete and fuller sense of nurtured manhood."³

³ *Project Appleseed: Leave No Parent Behind*, 2007; available from www.projectappleseed.org; Internet.

Lour also mentions the idea of identifying and supporting learning environments beyond the schools. Public libraries have created many homework centers that offer children many reference books useful for the completion of their homework assignments.

Lour also mentions the idea that neighborhoods can develop learning centers albeit more informal. Amy Pickell, of San Diego, created a neighborhood reading program called Reading Pals, in which she with the help of neighborhood parents, the older children and enlisted them as reading tutors to younger children.

Creating an organizational structure for parent involvement is another idea shared. He contends that without organizational structure for parent visitors and volunteers, parents can feel at a loss as to how they can be of assistance at the schools. Lour shares the parents, at an elementary school in New Braunfels, Texas established a PTA office in the building where they could come and work on the requests from a teacher's "wish box."

This project will focus on the process of empowering parents to become actively involved in their children's education after conveying the need for the church to address the social injustices of this day. Though numerous studies and techniques have been implemented in this parental process, this project focused on the unique process of involving parents within the church.

The Church and Education

"Education has proven, in many ways, to be an Anti-Poverty weapon." (Dr. Claude Alexander)

As one deals with how the Church empowers parents to become actively involved in their children's education, one will expose how the church has always had a major role

in the educational development of children. History reveals that the concept of Sunday School was originally designed to educate those who worked during the week and were uneducated.

Raising Lifelong Learners: A Parent's Guide, by Lucy Calkins and Lydia Bellin, was prudent in the writer's research. They are empathetic in mentioning how there is no magic wand that turns people into the parents they long to become. They believe that there is no job that requires more intelligence, knowledge, and energy than parenting. It is one of the least supported area of parent's experiences and yet the most challenging. They go further to state that parents receive more support when the children are newborns, "How are they sleeping, How are they eating, etc., but receive least support when the children start school, "Are practicing the piano regularly?", or "Did they remember to bring their homework home?" The text emphasizes how the parents are the child's first and most important teachers. It is crucial that parents move beyond the need for help with newborns and focus on the need for help in educating the child's mind and character. It is suggested that the qualities that matter most in science and math, reading and writing- initiative, thoughtfulness, curiosity, resourcefulness, perseverance, and imagination are best nurtured through the environments the parents create in the home.

An expert from their work asserts:

It truly helps when parents become involved in the life of their child's school. Parent's involvement in school tells their child that they endorse the school and that they regard themselves as partners in their child's education. This is an important message to sent to the child, to the child's teacher, and to all the people who comprise the school. A school is really a network of relationships, with the

principal, classroom teachers, special teachers, parents of other children, and the children themselves.⁴

Juan Williams in his New York Times Bestseller, *Enough*, states, “To be able to read and write was a sign of self-determination, or strength. A man or woman who could read was a cut above, clearly focused on leaving cultural and educational capital for their children, even if they had no monetary wealth to pass on.”⁵ Williams goes on to verbalize what he believes is the lack of leadership that speaks out to Black parents and Black students about the destructive cycle rooted in a crippling culture that disregards the need for education.

Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, in his book entitled *Countering the Conspiracy To Kill Black Boys*, helped the researcher understand the mindset that there are systems that the church and parents must take notice. He expresses how the black boys who have been trapped in cycle to ignorance and destruction that has been around for a long time. He then gives an analysis of the conditions that have oppressed the young black males in their communities. He shares that prevention is the key to success. In order to increase the probability of success in the lives of African American males, they must be culturally and morally taught as young boys in order to prevent destructive mindsets and prepare for optimistic futures.⁶

Hugh B. Price, in his book *Achievement Matters: Getting Your Child the Best Education Possible*, gives many inspiring stories and expert tips which have helped the

⁴ Lucy Calkin and Lydia Bellin, *Raising Lifelong Learners: A Parent's Guide* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo, 1998), 293.

⁵ Juan Williams, *Enough* (New York: Crown, 2006), 12.

⁶ Jawanza Kunjufu, *Countering the Conspiracy To Destroy Black Boys, vol. 1* (Chicago: African-American Images, 1995), 1.

writer in the shaping of his project. He shared how the Chicago Tribune survey found that of the city's 550 public schools only 24 had levels of high potential involvement. As result, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley held a series of citywide assemblies to equip adults with the skills and knowledge to help their children with schoolwork and boost parental involvement in order to improve children's performance in the classroom. The assemblies were open to all adults with children in public, private, or parochial schools. The gatherings featured workshops on topics ranging from "Raising a Reader" to "The Effects of Health and Nutrition on Your Child's Learning." The workshops provided information about services and programs readily available for adults who are raising children. Price believes that parental interest and involvement reinforce the natural inclination of children to strive to do their best. Lousy schools with apathetic and alienated pupils can improve only if the adults in their lives mobilize to make it happen and refuse to accept any excuses for failure.

He goes on to list seven basic ways parents can help their children develop a thirst for learning and acquire the skills they will need to do well in school. First, parents should start early to help their children become better readers by reading to them from the time they are toddlers and having them read to you as soon as they're able. Second, parents should use everyday occurrences, such as cooking and family trips, as ways of helping youngsters practice doing math and learning to look up things in books. Thirdly, parents should make sure their children read for fun. This would build a love of learning and discovery and eventually make them a more proficient reader. Fourthly, parents should help their children turn their favorite hobbies into enjoyable learning experiences that enable them to practice skills they are taught in school. Fifth, parents should visit the

school on parent-teacher nights and in between if necessary so both the teachers and their child know that the parent means business when it comes to their children getting a good education. Sixth, parents should establish appropriate routines at home, like creating quiet time for homework and recreational reading, and limiting the amount of television they can watch. And lastly, parents should visit libraries, bookstores, and book fairs with their children so they can see that reading is important to them and that it should be to them.⁷

Price follows up by listing six ways parents keep watch of their children so they will not loose ground. The first way is to consider the tendency of Black youngsters to slip backward around the third or fourth grade. Then pay close attention for any backsliding in these grades even if they did well in the early years. The second way is to monitor each report card and to make sure that their child is performing at grade level or better. Do not just accept the teachers' word for it. Parents should still ask the teacher for ways to make better those with decent grades. The third way for parents is to talk frequently with your children about what's happening in their class. Parents should ask to see any notices from the teacher, guidance counselor, or principal. They should look for signs that their children are extremely bored, disengaged, dropping out, or withdrawn from school. They should seek counsel to get them back on track. The fourth way is to challenge any suggestions by the schools to place their child in special education. Parents should insist on receiving a second opinion about whether the placement really is necessary. Since the pattern of wrongful and unneeded assignment of the purgatory of special education is so widespread, one should seek expert second opinions before consenting. The fifth way parents need to watch their children is by working closely with

⁷ Hugh B. Price, *Achievement Matters: Getting Your Child the Best Education Possible* (New York: Kensington, 2003), 22.

teachers to ensure that early warning systems are in place and make certain that activities and supervision outside of school are fully in synch with what happens inside the classroom. Price mentions that the sixth and final way is to keep your kids from falling under the influence of friends and classmates who say achievement isn't important. Cheer them on at home, and show up when they're involved in school activities.

Joyce L. Epstein and Susan L. Dauber coauthored an article entitled, *School Programs and Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement in Inner-City Elementary and Middle Schools*, where they where they pulled extensive data from over 170 teachers in different inner-city elementary and middle schools to examine the connection between school programs of parent attitudes, and the practices that teachers use to involve parents of the children they presently teach. They discussed five types of involvement that should take place in order for children to succeed in their educational development. The first is the basic obligations of families. This obligation seeks to provide for children's health and safety. This obligation seeks to also develop parenting skills and child-rearing approaches that prepare children for school and to maintain healthy children development which in turns builds positive home conditions that support school learning and school behavior. The second type of involvement is the basic obligations of schools. This obligation seeks to communicate with families about school programs and children's progress. It also includes memos, notices, phone calls, report cards, and conferences that most schools create and conduct. The third type of involvement is the involvement at school. This obligation seeks to assist teachers, administrators, and children in classrooms or other areas of the school. One should also support student performances, sports, etc. The fourth type of involvement is the involvement in learning activities at home. This

obligation is fulfilled when the request for guidance from teachers for parents to assist their children in learning at home that coordinates with the children's class work. Parents also provide information on skills required of students to pass each grade. Schools provide information to families on how to monitor, discuss, and help with homework and when and how to make decision about school programs activities and opportunities at each grade level so that all students can be more successful in school. The final type of obligation is the involvement in decision-making. This involvement seeks to place parents in the participatory roles in (PTA or PTO), advisory councils, Chapter 1 programs, and groups at the school as well as the district.⁸

Ministry Focus

J. Max Barber, a Black journalist, wrote in 1905, "Educate! Educate! Educate! Get all the knowledge within reach and then use it for the good of the race." This must start when the children are young. In order for this to take place, parents must understand the importance of their involvement in their child's education.

In this postmodern culture, church leaders and parishioners must make the pursuit of education for children a priority focus of their ministry as many striving and growing churches have done. This implies that the church, especially the Black Church, is thirsting for leaders who can take on the educational plight that many congregations and community face. It is the author's thoughts and convictions that there is a Divine mandate

⁸ Joyce Epstein and Susan L. Dauber, *School Programs and Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement in Inner-City Elementary and Middle Schools*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1991), 290.

for a ministry to address the preset plight. This has been birthed through the author's personal experiences.

Williams describes the convicting speech given by actor and comedian Bill Cosby during the gala NAACP 50th anniversary celebrating the Brown v. Board of Education case. This landmark case integrated public schools. He says that education was a radical tool of liberation for Black people who were enslaved and purposely denied the chance to learn. Out of all the rebuking that Cosby lashed out during his speeches he really put a lot of weight on the parents. He angrily charges the people by saying, "We are letting TV sets raise our children." Statistics show that only 37% of Black children live with a mother and father in two-parent families." It is through these issues that the majority of the children, especially the poor, received little attention from parents. A study done recently show that 50% of Black fourth graders watch TV for five or more hours on a typical school day. Fewer than 20% of White fourth graders watch that much television. It is this that has an impact on study time. One researcher asked Black and Hispanic children what was the lowest grade they could get in school without angering their parents, the answer was C-minus, When the same question was asked of White students, the threshold for facing an angry parent was B-minus. This shows that Black parents display low expectations for their children. After another study in a suburban place in Ohio, data showed that the middle-class Black parents spend less time than the middle-class White parents in helping their children with homework and staying in touch with teachers. It showed that middle-class black parents put as little effort into tracking their children's school-work as did the poorest white parents. It was because of that from kindergarten to high school, black students put relatively little effort into their homework.

Cosby also tied the high rate of Black inmates to what he described as criminally bad parenting, mothers and fathers failing to spend time with their children, especially men who don't stay around after they get a woman pregnant. Williams sums it up by saying how the relationship between illiteracy and young Black people who end up in the prison system is close. It boils down to absent parents, dropping out of school, and acceptance of criminal behavior that result in jail time.

In the book, *Parents, Their Children and Schools*, edited by James S. Coleman and Barbara Schneider, the writer attests to the very same mindset. Almost every educator claims that parental involvement improves student learning. Private and Church schools believe that parental support is one of the major reasons why schools today do not have adequate parental support and involvement.

1. At inner-city schools, some parents work two or more jobs in order to feed, house, and clothe their families. These parents are extremely tired when they get home, or they are often not at home when their children do homework. These parents mean well, but they do not have the time or the energy to help their children with schoolwork.
2. Some parents are illiterate. Either they were failures in school or the school system failed them. They hated school and never felt comfortable there. In fact, many of these people can barely carry on a conversation with a teacher.
3. At some schools, teachers do not invest the time it takes to build a working partnership with parents. They invest the minimum amount of time and effort possible into "back-to-school" or parent/teacher conference nights. When the teachers do meet with parents, the teachers usually tell the parents that their

children are doing fairly well or will probably do better as they mature. They never send any information home to tell parents how they can help.

Bonsher believes that schools can do a great deal more to encourage a more meaningful working partnership between teachers and parents.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In this paper the writer will lay the particulars needed for the foundation of the research project. The writer will explain parental involvement from a biblical perspective and provide biblical warrants for the research made. He will explain the theological viewpoints that ground the parental ministry used in this project. I will also lead a discussion on God as a God of Involvement and Instructor in the life of His Son, Jesus Christ, Empowerer in the life of children, and the Black church as an institution for children's learning and development. I will track parental involvement from antiquity to the present, thus demonstrating the transformation of church thought on the matter of parental involvement in children. It shares crucial personality traits in each period that paved the way for an even greater need for parental involvement in contemporary society. Lastly, I will illustrate how the lack of parental involvement has plagued the Black family since the day Africans landed on American soil to the present day struggles that are slowly destroying black children.

Theoretical Foundation

Today African American children are facing one of the most destructive levels of injustice that this country could possibly offer. They are in danger of becoming ineffective and not prepared for a society that is on the verge of leaving them behind.

They are lacking the basic social skills required to adjust to this work world. High school dropout rates are astronomical and still rising. They are no longer bound by the chains of slavery but the chains of a society that is set up for them to fail in. Children are failing the basic skills tests that are required for them to graduate from high school. Celeste Fremon and Stephanie Renfrow Hamilton believe by fourth grade, many African American boys will be headed in a downward spiral in reading and writing. They are already falling behind in the classroom. Some feel as if educators are not doing what is necessary for the children to reach their full potential within the classroom. A large percentage of the children who are placed in Special Education are the African American children. Jawanza Kunjufu, in his book entitled *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys* mentions how 85% of the African American children placed in special education are African American boys.¹ Because of their failure in the educational system, African American children are then sent into a society where they are not equipped to handle the pressures and eventually many are destined to be in poverty or prison. What makes this situation an even more sad reality is when parents, the government, and the church see the decline and dismantling of our children and do nothing about it.

In order for the children of God to address the injustices within a society which is set up to fail our children educationally, they must receive the education needed to prepare them. It is with this thought that makes Parental Involvement essential to children's educational development. There are a few reasons to why this is so important and essential. One reason why parental involvement is so essential, especially within the African American community, is because of the constant decline of Black teachers.

¹ Jawanza Kunjufu, *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys* (Chicago: African American Images, 1995), 17.

Although laws requiring that Black children be taught in black schools (and by Black teachers) no longer exist, there is still a compelling need for minority teachers in the nation's classrooms. Yet minority teachers are quickly becoming a vanishing resource. Indeed, this trend has threatened fewer and fewer Black students into entering the teaching profession.²

The percentage of Black and other minority teachers has dropped drastically in the past decade. Currently, approximately 6.9% of public school teachers are Black and 1.9% is Hispanic. Seven years ago, the teaching population was 8.6%. Data on education majors suggests that the non-White teaching force will continue to diminish in number. Poor salaries and working conditions, coupled with the prospects of brighter futures in other careers, have diminished the attractiveness of the profession. In conversation with many minority teachers, there has always been a common thread in terms of concern, the feeling of not being appreciated and supported by either administration or parents. Newly imposed educational and assessment criteria in teacher education have also had a negative impact on Blacks and other minorities entering teaching. This component seems to have the greatest negative impact than all others combined.³

The second reason why parental involvement is essential to children's educational development is because the government has totally failed minority children and their schools. In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) promised to revolutionize American public education. Many educators and administrators originally supported this

² Eva Wells Chunn and Willy DeMarcell Smith, *Black Education: A Quest for Equity and Excellence*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction, 1993), 54.

³ Ibid., 55.

act because it promised to improve the way schools serve poor children. The broad goal of NCLB is to raise the achievement levels of all students, especially underperforming groups, and to close the achievement gap that parallels race and class distinctions. On the contrary, this act that has been promoted as an educational reform to help the underprivileged community has become a prime example of social injustice. According to the legislation, too many are attending failing or unsafe schools, too many receive poor teaching and are performing well below potential, and too many are leaving school altogether.⁴

The Harvard Civil Rights Project, along with other advocacy groups, has warned that NCLB threatens to increase the growing dropout and putout rates for students of color, ultimately reducing access to education for these students rather than enhancing it. As the evidence of NCLB unintended consequences emerges, it seems increasingly clear that despite its good intentions and admirable goals, NCLB, as currently implemented, is more likely to harm than to help most of the students who are the targets of its aspirations. They suggest that it is more likely to undermine the Nation's public education system than to improve it. These outcomes are likely because the under funded bill layers onto a grossly unequal, and in many communities, inadequately funded school system. A set of unattainable test score targets that disproportionately penalize schools serving the neediest students, while creating strong incentives for schools to keep out or push out those students who are low achieving in order to raise school average test

⁴ Deborah Meier and George Wood, *Many Children Left Behind: How the No Child Left Behind Act Is Damaging Our Children and Our Schools* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon, 2004), 3.

scores.⁵ This has been another component to why the Black teacher population is declining. They are no longer motivated to offer an enriched method of teaching to the students rather they push the student to prepare for the testing.

Linda Darling-Hammond contends that some of the NCLB's most important and potentially productive components such as the effort to ensure that all students have highly qualified teachers and successful educational options and supports are in danger of being extinguished by the shortcomings of a shortsighted, one-way accountability system that holds children and educators to test-based standards that they are not enabled to meet, while it does not hold Federal or State governments to standards that would ensure equal and adequate educational opportunity.

There are a few other problems that the NCLB does not address. One is the enormous equality in the provision of education offered in the United States. The wealthiest U.S. public schools spend at least ten times more than the poorest schools. There have been spending ratios that are 4 to 1. It also has been documented in Federal statistics and lawsuits; schools serving large numbers of low income students and students of color have larger class sizes, fewer teachers and counselors, fewer and lower-quality academic courses, extracurricular activities, books, materials, supplies, computers, libraries, and other services. It seems obvious why parents need to step forward and play a more significant role in their children's educational development. The lack of resources from our government leads to a level of frustration and eventual lack of passion from the educators.

⁵ Ibid., 5.

Another reason why it is essential for parents to be actively involved in the educational development of their children is because they, especially within the African American community, are in danger of becoming a part of the massive failure in our communities. The children, especially Black males who do not excel in their education, are more likely to drop out of school. Those who are out of school and out of work are more susceptible to illegal activities that will likely result in their incarceration. Phillip Jackson in his essay entitled, "The Massive Failure of Black Males in the American Education System," states that this problem is so severe that every day that passes without an adequate response from the Black community leads more young black men into drugs, gangs, violence, prison, and ultimately to their death. Just in the city of Indianapolis alone there is only a dismal 33% graduation rate of young Black males in high school. Nationally, in reading, only 13% of Black fourth grade students and 11% of Black eighth graders score as proficient. Though as unfair as it may appear, it is clear that if we rely on the system to educate our children then we are co-conspirators to their educational demise.

It is also clear throughout the Bible that God loves children and is concerned about their welfare. The book of Proverbs spends a lot of time focusing on a Father's advice to his son. The advice was given so that the son would receive the knowledge that will empower him to walk in a more secure future. Because God is concerned about the welfare of children, He has placed passion and ability in the lives of churches and communities that they may be able to teach the children what is needed to succeed in this life. In Exodus and Leviticus, God commanded His people to obey His commandments and to teach them to their children.

Parents are not the only ones responsible for the development of their children. The church needs to take an active role as well. Unless the church fulfills its mandate in developing the next generation, the children will not be prepared to adequately function in today's society. Lee N. June contends that the church is like that of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Old Testament--to act in promoting spiritual, ethnic, and psychological rejuvenation among a people recovering from captivity; modeling and proclaiming God's truth to men, women, and children through evangelism and discipleship so that Christ's sovereign rule will be acknowledged in the family.⁶ God, the Creator, controls and distributes the creativity, talents, resources, and opportunities needed to bless the lives of one's families and others (Pr. 2:5-11; Jas. 1:5). That is why it is so important for families and for the church to deposit the seeds of success and wisdom in children's lives. The church cannot fail at its task without also damaging the potential of Black families and ultimately, the Black community. Unlike other cultures and ethnic groups, the Black community's survival has, for years, depended upon the functionality of the church. Indeed, the church must be the means through which Black families unite to invest their time and resources to accomplish essential economic, social, and political objectives for the Black community.⁷ The Black church has been for centuries the fueling of all social and political actions. There is a need for them now to take a more active role in the educational development of children. It starts with encouraging and motivating the parents to take a more active role. It is essential for the church to be the resource center for enhancing the Black family and reconstructing the foundations of our children.

⁶ Lee N. June, *The Black Family: Past, Present & Future: Perspectives of Sixteen Black Christian Leaders* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1991), 27.

⁷ Ibid., 28.

One particular reason why the church must be an active force for parental involvement is because the traditional view of two-parent homes are being out numbered by single-parent homes. Statistics show that 54.5% of Black children under 18 years of age lived in single-parent households. Of these homes 51.1% are headed by females and 3.4% by males (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990). Through these challenges, the Black community is fed with issues of, what June believes, to be isolated, alienated, depressed and hopeless.

Biblical Foundation

Being involved in the life of a child is heavily predicated on how one views them. If one views the children as negative, then chances are they may fulfill that particular prophecy. If one views them in a positive manner then one would expect nothing less than positive things out of them. The bible presents a plethora of references pertaining to how children are viewed as a blessing from God and proof of His Divine Favor.

Ps 127:3-5 states, “Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.”⁸ In the Old Testament, people felt as if God had shown to them great favor when they were with child. Hannah went through great grief because she was not able to bear any children. She was mocked and teased by other women who left her at a place of depression. Having no children made her feel so humiliated and hurt that it sometimes kept her from eating. She later cried and asked the Lord for help. She

⁸ Ps 127:3-5

discussed her condition as an affliction. That word affliction in the Hebrew translation is *onee*, which simply means misery. Hannah's inability to have children left her at a state of being miserable. After praying to the Lord, she went back home with her husband and later became pregnant with a son. The Bible describes this phenomenon with the words, *"And the Lord remembered her."* It was the reality of her pregnancy that encourages one that God was thinking about her.

*"And she said to him, 'As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given to the Lord. And they worshipped the Lord there.'"*⁹ It was out of their appreciation towards God's blessings, in the way of children, that they offered God their worship. The responsibilities of being involved in the development of children were placed upon the shoulders of the mother as well as the father. Children were under absolute authority and control of the father. Sons were trained in the traditions of the community and in the meaning of wisdom. It was their fathers who were responsible for arranging their son's marriages. As for the daughters, the father was responsible for writing contracts for their marriages. The mother had equal responsibilities. Proverbs indicates that even in ancient times mothers shared with fathers the responsibility for instructing and disciplining children.¹⁰ *"Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's*

⁹ 1 Sa 1:26&27

¹⁰ Trent Butler and C. Holman, *Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman, 1991), 990.

teaching.”¹¹ It is noted that Proverbs displays a list of instructions taught by King Lemuel’s mother. “*The sayings of King Lemuel- an oracle his mother taught him:*”¹²

Parental involvement has always been a part of the biblical mandate in the lives of Christians. It has not been stressed much from the pulpits, but it is definitely something that the Bible is clear on. The Bible says in Pr 22:6, “Train up a child in the right way, and when old they will not stray.” The word train in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *howak*, which means to set them aside or narrowing. Child-training involves “narrowing” a child’s conduct away from evil and toward godliness in gearing him or her in the right direction. Gleason L. Archer mentions that the Hebrew verb is similar to the Egyptian *h-n-k*, which means to set up something for divine service. He suggests that this word *train* gives a range of possible meanings: “Dedicate the child to God,” “Prepare the child for his or her future responsibilities,” and “Exercise or train the child for adulthood.”¹³

There are times when involvement and participation for the development of children does not always rest solely on the parents. Sometimes the community plays a part and are looked upon to being involved the children’s lives. The woman Hannah in 1 Samuel 1 gave her baby Samuel to the priest Eli, where he learned and developed as a prophet in the temple. It was no longer Samuel’s mother and father who were to aid in his development. It was the priest Eli who took the young man under his tutelage. “*Then*

¹¹ Pr 1:8

¹² Pr 31:1

¹³ C.L. Williams, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan , 1982), 252.

Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest.”¹⁴

The Bible is clear in mentioning how child rearing and development rests on the responsibility of the parents. It gives instruction on how parental involvement must be a part of the child’s developmental process. The Bible also talks about how effective children can be if the parents are involved in their lives.

It is with this clarity that exposes how the lack of parental involvement poses as a problem biblically. The Bible presents seven reasons why poor parental involvement is a serious problem biblically and is not viewed as acceptable in the Bible. The first reason why the lack of parental involvement is unacceptable is because when they are not involved they become threatened to receive harsh judgment from God. In 2 Sa 3: 12-14 the prophet Samuel receives a message from God, “On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever for the iniquity that he knew because his sons were blaspheming God and he did not restrain them. Therefore, I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever.”

The second reason the Bible considers lack of parental involvement as problematic and unacceptable is because it places the children at risk to becoming disrespectful towards others. The sons of Eli were regarded as scoundrels because they had no respect for God or the people in the temple. He heard about all that his sons were

¹⁴ 1Sa 2:11

doing to all the people of Israel and how they lay with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.¹⁵

A third reason why the lack of parental involvement is unacceptable is that it can push children to being disrespectful to their own siblings. Some of the disrespect shown can become as severe as someone losing one's life. King David had children who were blatantly disrespectful to each other. His son Amnon pretended to be sick and asked his father to send his sister Tamar to come and feed him. As soon as she arrived to the room, Amnon took hold of her and raped her; then ordered for her to be put out of his room.¹⁶ When David heard about what his children had done, he only showed his emotions and no actions. When her other brother Absalom heard about what Amnon did to Tamar, he set up a party that tricked him into coming and Absalom set up his brother's murder.¹⁷

A fourth reason why the lack of parental involvement poses as a problem to the Bible is because it potentially positions the children in situations that are life-threatening. In Acts, there was a young man who was in church but sitting in a very dangerous position. No one noticed him sleeping three stories high in an open window. Since no one noticed that the young man was falling asleep, he did and fell three stories down. The fall was so bad that he was presumed dead.¹⁸

A fifth reason why the lack of parental involvement can be biblically problematic is because the children can in turn cause and initiate suffering in their parents' life. The

¹⁵ 2 Sa 2:22

¹⁶ 2 Sa 13: 11-21

¹⁷ 2 Sa 13: 29

¹⁸ Ac 20: 9&10

scripture says a wise child makes a glad father, but a foolish child is a mother's grief.¹⁹ It also says that foolish children are a grief to their father and bitterness to her who bore them.

On a more positive note, a sixth reason why it poses as a problem to not be actively involved is because of the benefits it produces when involvement takes place. In fact, one has the potential of their children being a great blessing and benefit to them. The scripture states, "Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband too, and he praises her."²⁰

A seventh reason why the lack thereof is biblically problematic is because the scripture says to those who have been faithfully involved in the development of their children will ultimately put their children in a place to be blessed and successful. The scripture says that their descendents will be mighty and the generation of the upright will be blessed.²¹ That word upright in the Hebrew translation is *yashar*, which means to be straightforward and correct. The parents must be straightforward publicly and especially privately (around your children). The scripture also says that you shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity, for their offspring (children) shall be blessed by the Lord and their descendents as well.²²

All throughout the Gospels, there are stories of many children being healed, delivered, and restored because of the heavy involvement of their parents. An example of

¹⁹ Pr 10:1

²⁰ Pr 31:28

²¹ Psa 112:2

²² Isa 65:23

this is found in Mark 5:22-24 and 35-43. This father was a highly respected leader in the synagogue. Mark writes, “Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and when he saw Jesus, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, ‘My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she be made well and live.’” So Jesus went with Jairus.²³ When he put them out of the house, he took the child’s father and mother; and those who were with him; and went in where the child was.²⁴ Immediately the girl got up and began to walk about. (She was twelve years of age). They were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one know this and told them to give her something to eat.²⁵ The Bible also mentions how there were a woman who would normally be listed as an outcast (a Syro-phenician mother) who was actively involved in her daughter’s life. Mark chapter 7 says, “In fact as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. “First let the children eat all they want,” he told her, “for it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “but even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” Then he told her, “For such a reply, you may go: the demon has left your daughter.” She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon was gone.”²⁶

²³ Mark 5: 21-24

²⁴ Mark 5: 40b

²⁵ Mark 5: 42 & 43

²⁶ Mark 7:25-30

There were many other instances where miracles and wonders were performed in the lives of children whose parents were involved in their transformation. Jesus performed other miracles in the lives of young men and women whose parents whose social statuses ranged from low-income, common men and women to people who hold high positions. It shows that it should not matter what one's position or social status may be; if one stays involved in their child's life and development, God will bring great things out of them.

In Jewish customs, the mothers would be responsible of teaching their daughters different responsibilities around the home and the fathers would be responsible for teaching their sons a trade. Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, was a carpenter by trade and taught Jesus the trade of carpentry. In Matt 13:55, it was said of Jesus, "Is not this the carpenter's son? (Referring to Joseph). In Mark 6:3 it was said, "Is not this the carpenter?" (Referring to Jesus).²⁷

So with this contention, the bible is clear that problems arise if parents are not actively involved in the development of their children. Since the lack of involvement brings about conditions that threaten the positive existence for children and their succeeding generation, God opposes it. Any action that God opposes is considered sin.

Theological Foundation

One must ask the question, what exactly is sin? Ever since the beginning of time, humanity as a whole has struggled with the reality of sin. Sin is that which will rob humanity of its divine essence and possibility. It brings about something that God hates

²⁷ M.G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Easton, 1996), 153.

separation between God and man, between man and man, and between man and purpose. It is this view that grounds this writer's research. In this view, humanity has made decisions that exclude God all together. Some would contend that humanity is God's creation and should be completely dependent on Him. The reason for humanity's existence is to be in relationship with God. Subsequently, humanity has the tendencies to shy away from God's original design and plan to make decisions without involving Him. It is in one's exclusion of God that we rebel against His plan for them and find oneself in a place of despair. According to Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price, sin alienates from God, divides the sinner from God's community, and disrupts the life of the sinner, and in that measure disorders creation.²⁸ This theory proved itself true in the Garden of Eden where the fall of man took place. After receiving instructions from God, Eve, the wife of Adam later began to have conversations with the evil one.

The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.²⁹

To allow the time to accumulate in their evil conversation shows that their allowance of God's involvement had become ignored. When God's involvement is not adhered to humanity has the tendency to do sin towards God.

²⁸ D. W. Musser and J. L. Price, *A New Handbook of Christian Theology* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1992), 442.

²⁹ Gen 3:1-6

To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of you brow you will eat you food until you return to the ground since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.³⁰

God knows the results of sin and will become involved early in the lives of humanity to warn of Sins capability and consequences. It is when humanity ignores the voice of God and refuses to acknowledge His involvement.

In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

Sin is not only viewed by the negating of God’s involvement in one’s life, but it when Humanity displays the lack of involvement. This is another aspect which will ground the focus of the project. This is called the sin of Omission. In Jas 4:17 sin is

³⁰ Gen 3: 17-24

looked upon as knowing what is right and failing to do so. “Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.”³¹

Some believe sin breaks the divine communion with God. Man was created to be in perfect fellowship with God and neighbor, but through willful disobedience, man broke communion with God and neighbor and is cursed with alienation and estrangement from God and neighbor.

Estrangement, described by Paul Tillich, is the removal from an accustomed place or set of associations is definitely implied. It is also implied in the symbols of the expulsion from paradise in the hostility between man and nature, in the deadly hostility of brother against brother, in the estrangement of nation from nation through the confusion of language, and in the continuous complaints of the prophets against their Kings and people who turn to alien gods.³²

Daniel L. Migliore contends that sin is fundamentally in opposition to grace, saying No to the invitation to become human in grateful service to God and in friendship with our fellow creatures. It is the great refusal to live thankfully and gladly by the grace of God that makes personal life in community with diverse others possible.³³ By rejecting the grace of God in our lives, one run the risk of negating oneself and may allow other creatures to take the place of God in our lives. It is when we allow other creatures to have the level of involvement that only God desires and deserves that humanity falls.

³¹ James 4:17

³² Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: vol 2* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 125.

³³ Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 130.

The God of the Bible has always been a God of Involvement. In other words, God presents himself to whatever situation in order to bring about a divine change. In Gen 1:1-31, God becomes involved in a world that was nothing and sets forth such a divine change that one would be unable to tell there was a void in the first place. God's creation has been put in place for others to become actively involved in the development and sustenance of it. God created Man for the purpose of: (1) being in relationship and conversation with Him. As soon as Man was created, he began to hear from God in order that he may fulfill the purpose for which God created him. Hence, Man was created in God's own image. In the image of God He created him; male and female. God blessed them and asked of them, (2) to be in relationship with one another. The text of the bible proclaims it best, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." God also had a desire for Man to (3) be involved with his environment. God bestowed earth unto Man to fulfill three purposes. These purposes and responsibilities God holds and depends on man to uphold. Initially, God bestowed upon man the earth, so that he may control it. There is nothing on this earth that God has given to man that He is not able to subdue. A second reason God bestowed the earth upon man was so that it could be nourished. Man has the responsibility, but most importantly the means and resources needed to plant whatever is essential for the earth to grow. Finally, the third reason God put Man in charge of the earth was to maintain it. Man is responsible for making sure that they are good sustainers of what God has bestowed upon them.

It is understood that Man is not to stray outside of God's design and purpose for the earth. It is God who owns the land, and it is man who maintains it. Jeffrey A. Johnson

in his sermon entitled, “Girl, Get Your Money Straight,” states that “The earth is God’s by ownership and is Man’s by stewardship.”

God has been involved with the sustaining of humanity. The word, *sustain*, means to keep going or to preserve. When the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt, God sustained them. Ex 3:7 says, “And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters. “For I know their sorrows.” God’s involvement in their lives sustained them until He decided to deliver them from their enslavement. Paul Tillich describes God as a sustainer. He states in his book titled, “Systematic Theology” that, “Only in the power of being itself is the creative able to resist nonbeing.” Tillich believes that God is essentially creative and therefore He is creative in every moment of temporal existence, giving the power of being to everything that has come out of the creative ground of the divine life.

There is a doctrine of divine preservation that is intrinsically related to God as a sustainer. Preservation can be defined as the continuous work of God by which He maintains the things that He created, together with the properties and powers with which He endowed them.

John Cobb, a process theologian, contends that God is bipolar, or has two natures, and that He is integrally involved in the endless process of the world. Those who have experienced Divine encounters in the Bible have received it through the involvement of God. In Psalm 139, God is acknowledged as a God who is ever involved in their life of those who serve Him. It states, “O Lord you have searched me and know me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord you know it

completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.³⁴

In Tyndale Bible Dictionary, it contends that God continues to work out His will in the world, and even though He used various means, His independence remains in tact. Thus, He enters into fellowship with His covenant people and he publishes the gospel through human agents. His immutability or constancy expresses his changelessness and His faithfulness to Himself, to His decrees, promises, and works.³⁵ In John 5:7 God is showing how His immutability or constancy does not imply that He is static or immobile. He is a dynamic living God who is constantly working. Dr. Stirling Orr states that the proof of God's existence is simply that there are necessary acts of thought by which we rise from the finite to the infinite, from the caused to the uncaused, from the contingent to the necessary, from the reason involved in the structure of the universe to a universal and eternal reason, which is the ground of all, from morality in conscience to a moral Lawgiver and Judge.³⁶ Tillich believes that God is essentially creative and therefore He is creative in every moment of temporal existence, giving the power of being to everything that has being out of the creative ground of the divine life.³⁷ William Evans believes first that all things are held together by Him; if not this old world goes to pieces quickly. Secondly, Evans believes that the physical supplies for all God's creatures are in His hand; He feeds them all. What God gives, humanity will gather. If He withholds

³⁴ Psa 139: 1-6

³⁵ Walter A. Elwell, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1996), 438.

³⁶ William Evans, *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Chicago, Illinois: Evans Moody, 1974), 35.

³⁷ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 261.

provisions, humanity will die. Thirdly, God has His hand in history, guiding and shaping the affairs of nations. Finally one should consider with what detail God's care is described: The sparrows, the lilies, the hairs on the head, the tears of His children, etc. The personality of God is shown by His active interest and involvement in all things, even the smallest things, in the universe, the experience of men, and in the life of all His creatures.

An Involved Christ

Isaiah 7:14-15 reads, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."³⁸ The word Immanuel in its original language means "God with us". Some of the most famous debates have centered on this passage where the prophet Isaiah was referring to Jesus the Christ. Matthew 1:23 refers to the Isaiah passage to exclaim the coming of the Savior. It is with this belief that draws one to declare that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God. His very presence is the embodiment of the involvement of God.

Butler contends that Jesus is the clearest picture of God the world has ever seen--that is the affirmation of believing hearts. In Jesus Christ are united the vertical of God's revelation and the horizontal of history's meaning. Christians see in this one proper name a conjunction of God and man.³⁹

W. A. Criswell expresses his thoughts about the picture of Jesus this way:

Our blessed Lord combined in one, two natures, both complete;

³⁸ Isa 7:14&15

³⁹ Trent C. Butler, *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers. 1991), 775.

A perfect manhood all sublime, in Godhead all replete.
 As man He entered Cana's feast, humble guest to dine;
 As God He moved the water there, and changed it into wine.
 As man He climbed the mountain's height, suppliant to be;
 As God He left the place of prayer and walked upon the sea.
 As man He wept in heartfelt grief, beside a loved one's grave;
 As God He burst the bands of death, Almighty still to save.
 As man He lay within a boat o'erpowered by needful sleep;
 As God He rose, rebuked the wind and stilled the angry deep.
 Such was our Lord in life on earth, in dual nature one; The
 woman's seed in very truth and God's eternal Son.
 O Child, O Son, O Word made flesh, may Thy high praise
 increase: Called Wonderful, the Mighty God, Eternal Prince of
 Peace⁴⁰

An anonymous writer says, "Jesus Christ is the meeting place of eternity and time, the blending of deity and humanity, the junction of heaven and earth."⁴¹

S.D. Gordon describes Him as God spelling Himself out in language that man can understand.

Christology is a reflection upon the one whom the Christian community confesses as Lord and Savior. It deals with questions about who Jesus is and about why He makes the decisive difference in human destiny. Many scholars have many classical interpretations of the Christ. Sinclair Patterson makes the following statements: "If you take away the personality of Muhammad from Muhammadism, or the personality of Zoroaster from the religion of the Parees, the entire doctrine of these religions would still be left intact. Their practical value, such as it is, would not be imperiled or lessened. But take away from Christianity the name and person of Jesus Christ and what have you left?

⁴⁰ W. A. Criswell, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, vol.2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1982), 122.

⁴¹ Robert J. Morgan, *Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, & Quotes*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 477.

Nothing! The whole substance and strength of the Christian faith centers in Jesus Christ. Without Him there is absolutely nothing.”

According to Daniel Migliore, Jesus is described as Christ the Victor. He contends that the work of atonement is a dramatic struggle between God and the forces of evil in the world. Christ, under the cover of humanity battles with the demons, the devil, and all the principalities and powers that holds humanity captive. By Christ’s involvement on the cross and resurrection, Christ decisively defeats these powers and thus frees their captives.⁴² Brunner says Christ is what he does and does what he is.

A Liberation theologian contends that Jesus Christ is a liberator of those who are under privileged suffering within a corrupt culture and injustice system.

The scripture declares a particular saying that Jesus says, “The Spirit of the Lord I upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted; to preach deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set the captive free.” This scripture starts strongly on the thought that Christ was anointed for the task of being involved in the lives of those of His people who are misfortunate. Tillich exclaims that in all its concrete details the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ confirms his character as the bearer of the New Being or as the one in whom the conflict between the essential unity of God and man and man’s existential estrangement is overcome.⁴³

⁴² Daniel. L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 152.

⁴³ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: vol 2* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 125.

Jesus' parable of The Good Samaritan teaches a valuable lesson on how important it is to be involved in the lives of others.

“But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”⁴⁴

The Involvement of the Church

The church is the body of believers who have been anointed and called to fulfill the commission of Jesus Christ. “Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”⁴⁵

They are servants of the people; that is a community of faith called by God to be involved in the lives of others. The English word church is derived from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which mostly designates a local congregation of Christians and never a building. This is seen in the scriptures in Acts, James, 3 John, Revelation, and the earlier Pauline letters. Migliore explains that if the very nature of God is communal, if God enters into covenant with creatures and seeks their partnership, then questions regarding the nature of the church and its mission in the world today, far from being matters of secondary

⁴⁴ Luke 10:33-36

⁴⁵ Matthew 28

importance to the understanding of Christian faith, are quite central. While flawed and always in need of reform and renewal, the church is nonetheless the real beginning of God's new and inclusive community of liberated creatures reconciled to God and to each other and called to God's service in the world.

Butler conveys three basic perspectives, which embrace most descriptions of the church. First, the church is seen as the body of Christ; and a cluster of images exists in this context as emphasis falls on the head (Eph. 4:15-16), the members (1 Cor. 6:12-20), the body (1Cor.12:12-27), or the bride (Eph. 5:22-31). The church is also seen as God's new creation (2Cor. 5:17), the new persons (Eph. 2: 14-15), fighters against Satan (Eph. 6:10-20), or bearers of light (Eph. 5: 7-9). Thirdly, the church is quite often described as a fellowship of faith with its members described as the saints (1Cor. 1:2), the faithful (Col. 1:2), the witnesses (John 15:26-27), or the household of God (1 Pet 4: 17)⁴⁶

The church (whether referring to people or a place) is to be an arena of hope, peace, and joy in order for Jesus' Commission (Matt 28: 19-20) to go forth. William Carey argues that church history demonstrates that the church has not always taken the mission seriously. Although the ancient and early medieval church took the Gospel to the Germanic tribes, the medieval church neglected missions for centuries. Fighting for survival, the Reformation church also lacked missionary zeal. During the last 200 years, a passion for reaching the world for Christ has enriched the modern church.⁴⁷ Dietrich

⁴⁶ Trent C. Butler, *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 775.

⁴⁷ James P. Eckman, *Exploring Church History* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2002), 77.

Bonhoeffer, a German theologian and scholar, wrote that the church “must share in the secular problem of ordinary human life, not dominating but helping and serving.”

The Black Church

Due to the importance of religion in the black experience, it is generally thought that the black church is the dominant institution in the life of black Americans. C. Eric Lincoln in his book, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, contends that the most potent catalyst for the Black consciousness movement was the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr., beginning with the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. As powerful as this movement was, it was anchored in the Black church, organized by both activist Black ministers and laity, and supported financially by black church members.⁴⁸ Though the Black church was not always on the same page when it dealt with social activism, it was still the foundation to where the Black consciousness began. It is a supportive institution to the Black family and the Black community.

Ever since the emancipation period, the Black Church stood as the place where its members relied on the religious meetings to help them cope with the harshness of their lives and they held their congregations together or formed new ones after freedom.⁴⁹ The Black Church went far and beyond being a platform for spiritual satisfaction; they used the congregation as political platform for discussing and acting on the social injustices

⁴⁸ Eric C. Lincoln, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1990), 165.

⁴⁹ William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South 1865-1900* (Baton rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 99.

that affected the community. Because it was the only recognizable institution for the Black social platform, the churches began to provide services that ranged from education to recreation--in order that they could maintain the cohesiveness among those facing the negative aspects of their society. Even after the appearance of schools, lodges, and literary societies in the Black urban communities, churches held a prominent place in community life.⁵⁰ It was true in the past and is still true today that the black church is a major pillar within the black culture.

Historical Foundation

With the desires and ambitions that parents have for their children to become great representatives of success in society, there are so many barriers and challenges facing them that, at times plague and can assassinate their efforts. This is a long standing problem that still exists today. There have been barriers throughout history that have plagued the effectiveness of the family, specifically within the African American culture. In this particular writing, the writer will trace back to antiquity in the life of the Jewish culture to see how parental involvement has always been a part of history. The writer will also trace back to slavery in America, World War I and II, the Civil War, and the Great Depression to see that there were hindrances that were attempting to keep African American parents from being actively involved in the development of their children. This will expose the barriers that have been haunting the black family for centuries.

⁵⁰ William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South 1865-1900* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 99.

The Jews and Education

In the life of Jewish people and their customs, since antiquity, the role of the parent has been to be involved in the educational development of their children. Alfred Edersheim in his book entitled, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, explains how the privilege of parenting children and assisting in their development has long been a part of their culture. It is no doubt only the echo of the most ancient mode of congratulating a parent when to this day those who are present at a circumcision, and also the priest when the first-born is redeemed from him, utter this:

“As this child has been joined to the covenant” (or as the case may be, “attained this redemption”), “so may it also be to him in reference to the ‘thorah’, the chuppah, and to good works.”⁵¹

From Jewish perspectives, children were from their very infancy nourished up in the laws of God. There was no question that, according to the law of Moses, the early education of a child devolved upon the father; of course, always bearing in mind that his first training would be the mother's. If the father were not capable of elementary teaching, a stranger would be employed. Passing over the Old Testament period, we may take it that, in the days of Christ, home-teaching ordinarily began when the child was about three years old.⁵²

To the Jew, child-life was something peculiarly holy and the duty of filling it with thoughts of God especially sacred. Their religious care is closely connected with

⁵¹ Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ* (New York: Hendrickson, 1995), 128.

⁵² Ibid., 129.

education. Parents were also advised to have his child taught other skills such as swimming.

The Hebrew word for education is *hinukh*. It does not mean only formal schooling. It literally means “consecration” and refers to training a child for living, not only for a livelihood. The primary aims in the education of Jewish children are to (1) instill the moral and ethical values of the Jewish heritage; (2) encourage active observance of the Torah’s commandments (mitzvot); (3) transmit knowledge of the Torah, the Talmud, and the major Jewish sources; (4) create a strong sense of identification with and concern for all Jewish people. Jewish parents who only show concern for their children’s secular education as preparation for a successful career are in fact providing only for a small part of the total education called for by Jewish tradition.⁵³

Indeed the very first school to which any child is exposed is his own home; his very first and most important teachers are his own father and mother. It is the parents who play the dominant role in the formation of the child’s personality and way of life. Parents are the ones who provide the atmosphere from which the child derives a set of values and a set of assumptions about life. Though part of their children’s education is turned over to and shared with many teachers, parents are still the most effective educational force in the lives of their children. They educate in many ways: by the direct guidance they give; by the examples they set; by the environment they create at home; by the neighborhood they choose to live in; by the schools they select for the formal education of their children; and by the informal experiences they expose their children to.

⁵³ Hayim Donin, *To Be a Jew: A Guide to Jewish Observance in Contemporary Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), 129.

Only parents are able to provide early Jewish training in an atmosphere of joy and security. Such training at home should not be put off until the child begins his formal schooling. Jewish education in the truest sense must begin from the moment the child starts to become aware of his environment; it must become part of his natural surroundings, of his normal experiences.⁵⁴

The Affects From Slavery

During the devastating time of slavery, Africans were not looked upon as human; rather they were degraded and looked upon as property. Because there was of such a view, most Whites and slave owners, at that time, had no concern for the Black family. Just as humanity treat dogs to this day as mere property, so were Africans treated then. One tenet that slavery operated in to stop parental involvement was its efforts to maintain separation between them. A.M. French, in his book entitled, *Slavery in South Carolina* presents an agonizing picture of a mother at the auction being separated from her child. Enslaved women and children on the auction block being torn from one another particularly was a standard in antislavery imagery.⁵⁵ Through this period of separation, Africans had to deal and accept some realities that forced them into at least four shocking periods.

The first shock was that of being captured. During this period African people had to endure being pulled away and captured at different times than their children, parents, or spouses. The second shock that occurred was the shock of taking the long march to the

⁵⁴ Hayim Donin, *To Raise a Jewish Child* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 78.

⁵⁵ Fowell Buxton Thomas, *Letters on the Slave Trade to the Lord Visuant* (Melborne, London: J. Murray, 1831), 34-38.

sea from their native tribes and land. This incident was an absolute nightmare that lasted for many weeks. Under the glaring sun, through the streaming jungle, they were driven along like beasts tied together by their necks, day after day, eight or more hours at a time, they would stagger barefoot over thorny underbrush, dried reeds, and stones.⁵⁶ These hardships, thirsts, brutalities, and near starvations penetrated the experiences of each exhausted family member who reached the coast. The story was told how so many Africans, on their way to the coast would see dead bodies laying on the side of the routes. Some of the bodies were friends and families they recognized. The third shock, aside from the animalistic treatments, along with physical torments that accompanied it, was the sale to the European slavers. For those who were purchased, they were branded, given numbers on tags, and sent to the shipboard. The fourth and final shock, which was to many viewed as too stupefying to be called a mere “shock,” was the dreaded Middle Passage, brutalizing to any family, Black or White, who were involved. The holds, packed with squirming and suffocating humanity became stinking infernos of filth and pestilence.⁵⁷ Stories of diseases, deaths, and cruelties on the terrible two-month voyage, which was apart of this testimonial, did much toward ending the British slave trade forever.⁵⁸ One would observe that the separation that took place went well beyond being pulled from one another, but a separation that occurred mentally and morally. So many aspects had been severed from one’s family and kinship arrangements, one’s language, their tribal religion, taboos, the name one once was born to, and so many more. The old

⁵⁶ Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (New York: Dunlap press, 1963), 98.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 100.

values, sanctions, and standard could no longer furnish one's guides for conduct, for adjusting to the expectations of a completely new life. Though the insurmountable evidence of their survival was in tact physically, the lasting affect of their long dreaded expression haunted them throughout the remainder of their lives. Elmer P. Martin and Joanne Mitchell Martin, in their book entitled, *The Black Extended Family*, mentions what slavery did to traditional African family life. It temporarily minimized extended family ties, broke down the sense of community found in tribal life, and alienated Africans from an authentic identity with a God, a land, and a people.

The Civil War disrupted family life of Blacks. Additionally, after the defeat of the South, many Black families had to adjust to an industrial, business-oriented, urban way of life. Many were uneducated, and as a result were not able to successfully receive any justice either socially or economically. Legislation designed to give newly freed Blacks a start economically with land and farm tools but failed to get passed by Congress. Since the welfare given out by the Freedman's Bureau hardly made a dent in the poor conditions of Blacks, Black families had no choice but to organize once more around kinship bonds in order to survive. It was during this period that Blacks relied on the strengthening of the extended family.⁵⁹ It became an economic asset for Black people to have large, close-knit families since each child meant that more crops could be worked and more wages were brought into the family.

Blacks were slowly and painfully assimilated into urban society after World War I. In spite of the struggle of Blacks adjusting to this newness of life, the extended families

⁵⁹ Elmer P. Martin and Joanne Mitchell Martin, *The Black Extended Family* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 97.

were still going strong in the support of their dependent members. Though racism and segregation hindered the full participation of Blacks in the dominant American society, they reaffirmed the need for community support systems and for the extended family.

It was also during the Great Depression that the survival of Black family life was threatened more than slavery. Many of the members of the family resorted to the tactics and modes of survival utilized during slavery. This timeframe brought about a lot of pressure that weakened the family ties of the black family. Governmental assistance was deeply needed and more government dependence meant that black families came to rely less and less on their own survival techniques and that their own community support systems deteriorated.⁶⁰ These deficiencies caused blacks to deal more with the institutions rather than the loving family they once were.

During and after World War II, the industrial society opened up more opportunities for Blacks than ever before. More Blacks prospered, thus being able to form a more powerful family unit.⁶¹

The system however had become even more demanding that it still brought about an increase for them in the workforce and consequently a major decline in maintaining the strong family unity that has once been established.⁶² It is necessary and vital for the Black family to maintain their family knit and not allow the American society to make it look out-dated in today's culture.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 99.

⁶¹ Ibid., 101.

⁶² Ibid., 102.

At the present time, Blacks are more prosperous financially than they have ever been. The extent of freedom and opportunities are even more prevalent in today's society. Even with the opportunities that are presented in the twenty-first century for Blacks to take advantage of, there are still barriers that tend to infringe upon the functioning of the family unit. Lee June, editor of the book entitled, *The Black Family*, mentions at least three problematic entities that negatively affect the Blacks as an extended family. One of the issues falls within the arena of urbanization and remigration. The extended family in large cities is faced with either living in cramped quarters or trying to find a slightly larger residence that would most likely be prohibitively expensive. Availability of rentals in urban areas has also been impacted by the widespread conversion of moderately priced apartments into expensive condominiums.⁶³ This problem forces both parents to have to be employed so that they may maintain a certain lifestyle. Another issue the Black family is facing is the changes in the value system. It is believed that once a family member gains middle class status it is extremely difficult for that person to remain integrally connected to the rest of the extended family. June believes that the middle class emphasizes individualism: the extended family network tends to discourage individualism in its members because it may undermine the mutual support system so crucial to the family unit. The third issue that affects the family structure is the changes in government policies and assistance programs. These factors are presently impacting the extended family structure. Including Social security and Aid to Families with Dependent Children are among the various programs. Although increased funding for government

⁶³ Lee N. June ed., *The Black Family: Past, Present, & Future* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1991), 40.

welfare programs is necessary, it is insufficient to resolve the financial struggles currently overwhelming the poverty-stricken members of the Black family.⁶⁴

Shawn Ginwright argues that the lack of parental involvement was the result of a complex relationship between economic variables like unemployment and social conditions such as drug use. He contends that the devastating impact of the drug trade had an overwhelming impact on the schools.⁶⁵ For example, among children in the Alameda County juvenile court system, 85-95% have parents who used drugs. As a result of either court mandate or county child protective services, nearly one out of every ten students (ages 10 to 17) in Oakland did not live with either parent (Urban Strategies Council, 1996). An estimated 3,200 youth took up residence with relatives: grandparents (1,100), brothers or sisters (1,000), or aunts and uncles (1,100). Most common, however was foster care and residential placement which often filled the void of biological parents who had become victims of drug use. Not being able to care for their children, these biological parents rarely were able to be involved with their child's schooling. In an interview, one school counselor commented on the issue:

If I see a parent I'll talk to them, if they need some help, but usually you don't really see them. It's not like we have like a strong PTA or anything here at McClymonds. But I think that is because of the ages of some of the parents. Most of them were teen parents and stuff like that, so they're kind of now getting into their own life, becoming adults and doing their own thing. You know, 'My kid's a little older, I can go kick it,' you know, type thing. Or they are working so hard that they don't have time to, you know, come to the school to do things....Or they're not even present, because a lot of teens, too, live with grandparents or

⁶⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁶⁵ Shawn A. Ginwright, *Black in School: Afrocentric Reform, Urban Youth and the Promise of Hip-Hop Culture* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004), 64.

aunties or uncles and stuff like that....They might have gotten taken away from their parents because of [their parents'] substance abuse and neglect. [Or] they didn't, don't even get along with their parents so then they end up going to stay with another relative. Or, you know, that kind of stuff.⁶⁶

Though the barriers were evident, there were still some Black families who were able to spend the time needed to become educationally effective in their home. This is not a new practice. Parent participation is a practice that has some history. Sudia P. McCaleb in her book entitled *Building Communities of Learners: A Collaboration Among Teachers*, explains how parental involvement can be traced back to a time when mothers did not work outside the home and were generally available to meet the schedules and educational needs of their children.

Crouchett details the political and educational struggle in Oakland that was evident as early as 1871 when the community of Brooklyn (now Oakland) restricted Black children from attending its public schools. Being nearly a year without school, Black parents in Oakland organized and sustained a campaign demanding that their children be admitted without restriction. The campaign proved to be successful enough that in May 1872 the superintendent of schools for Oakland submitted motion to the board of education that African American children may apply for admission to any public school.⁶⁷

Families were also becoming involved during the Reconstruction period in order for their children, who were normally under a law which prohibited it, to receive an education. Desegregation efforts, initially pursued by black parents and communities to

⁶⁶ Ibid., 58

⁶⁷ Ibid., 59.

ensure that Black children would have equal access to a high-quality education, have been systematically resisted and thwarted by white communities in all regions of the country.⁶⁸

Due to the denials, curtailments, and setbacks Blacks had to face in the White society at the time, displayed, blacks were left with no choice but to participate more in their children's educational development. They engaged in more decision making in order for them to be exposed to the basic skills, contacts, and resources, which to become upwardly mobile. Valentine and Stark report that Project Head Start, a program that achieved national prominence during the Johnson administration's "War on Poverty" in the 1960s, shares several features with other programs that deal with the major influx on Blacks and Hispanics in urban metropolitan areas.

Parents also got involved in the early 1970s by questioning different procedures that were used by the school system. There were many parents who would be elected to different local school boards of the. Loretta Roach, who chaired Boston's Citywide Educational Coalition and a parent, argues that busing had damaged Black life as well as White students. Busing, she said, undermined parental involvement in the "often faraway schools their children are bused to every morning."⁶⁹ Her beliefs on the topic were not accepted by all Blacks, who believed in desegregation; yet her participation and concern as a parent should be commended.

⁶⁸ Eva Wells Smith and Chunn Will McMarcell, *Black Education: A Quest for Equity and Excellence* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transactions, 1993), 59.

⁶⁹ Thomas E. Woods, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2004), 202.

Sheila Miller in her book entitled *Disability and the Black Community* expresses that the African American has a history of being strong, functional, and flexible. They provide a home environment that is culturally different from that of Euro-American families in several ways. It is of great significance that the family environment of African American is described as including ambiguity and the marginalization of living simultaneously in the world of Black community and the world of mainstream society. This environment is not limited to the stress of poverty or discrimination. It is a phenomenon unique to African Americans for many decades.⁷⁰ There has always been a consistent theme throughout the parent involvement literature that parents of poor and or minority children are unlikely to participate in their children's schooling and are rarely if ever present in schools. However, the majority of the data comes from the perspective of the school. Conversely, parent survey data reports that almost all parents, irrespective of ethnicity, income, or education desire educational success for their children and want to work with schools to achieve that goal. For example, a recent survey from an urban, Midwest sample with 50% ethnic minority respondents indicated that 95% of parents think about their child's future success and 67% of them expected their child to earn a college degree or complete graduate studies. African Americans in particular have historically used education as a shield against oppression and poverty. However, empirical data from families of color are sparse and tend to confound ethnicity and class variables.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Sheila D. Miller, *Disability and the Black Community* (Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, 2002), 129.

⁷¹ Jacqueline Cynthia Bobo and Claudine Michel Hudley, *The Black Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 360.

In a recent study where minority parents' participation was observed, over half of the parents reported attending at least the primary school ritual, open house, in the past year. Only 12 percent reported spending time in the class-room setting (e.g., room volunteer, career day speaker), and the majority of these responses came from parents of elementary school students. The parents who identified a need for more school events identified a wide variety of activities including multicultural events, PTA meetings, parent education, and student education activities. There were parents who specified a number of activities that should take place within the home to facilitate their children's education. They felt that their children's education should be comprised of learning experiences beyond those provided by the school. Cultural events (museum visits), ethnic awareness activities (African-American history lessons), and career exploration projects (visiting a friend's workplace) were frequently mentioned home-based efforts that parents felt to be their responsibility.⁷²

It is encouraging to know that in spite the challenges and barriers that parents face when attempting to get involved in their children's education; history proves that children, with the involvement of their parents can reach successful heights in the arena of education.

⁷² Ibid., 362.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The title of this ministry model is “Empowering Parents to Become Actively Involved In the Educational Development of Their Children.” This chapter discusses the methodology and design used to encourage parental involvement in their child’s education. This chapter discusses the research methodologies and why the researcher chose them. The researcher discusses the value of using a qualitative research methodology in this model. The researcher lists objectives for the project.

Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative research design during this project. The qualitative research method was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the ministry model. The actual research was geared to explain what took place in the sessions and to make sure the effect of each aspect is measured. The sessions were presented to a focus group of thirteen parents (five couples and three single parents). The methodology consisted of a pretest and posttest survey, questionnaires from a biblical and theological perspective, sermons, rap sessions, and evaluation. The reason the writer chose preaching as a component of the sessions in the project because the participants in the context are accustomed to receiving instruction from listening to preaching. The writer believes that preaching is when the preacher has an understanding of what God is saying using the scripture as the

authoritative source, and use what God says in scripture and communicate what God is saying the particular context. It was the writer's intentions for the participants to understand that their involvement as parents in their children's educational development is a God-given responsibility after hearing the preaching.

The objectives of this model were to accomplish the following:

1. To attain demographic data from those participating
2. To confirm if participants felt a need for parental involvement in children's education
3. To report the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the project

The researcher served as the speaker, administrator, and solicited qualitative data from all who participated. The researcher chose this research method because as the pastor, he desired to have interaction with those he shepherds. His goals were to minimize the distance between he and the participants, emphasize the importance of personal values and work within the context of the church.

This model fits the personality of the researcher because it requires the basic reading and writing skills that he possesses. The qualitative research design provides the researcher with the relief of being flexible and not feeling of being strapped to any specific rules or procedures of conducting research.

The basic assumption given by the researcher was that the parents who are members of New Beginnings Fellowship Church lack involvement in their children's education due to a lack of teaching and training. Therefore, he created a four-session ministry workshop designed to equip and inform members of the biblical, theological, and sound secular principles for getting involved in their children's education. The

purpose of the model was to provide parents with the understanding and the tools needed towards becoming actively involved in their child's education. It is the researcher's belief that by engaging in social research he could successfully assist the church in solving the problem of a lack of involvement from parents in their child's educational development. Being the senior pastor of the church, the researcher was familiar with the people and the problems they have with their children in school.

The premise is that by closely observing the statistical and theological views toward parental involvement, the participants would be provided with a better understanding of the importance of their involvement in their child's educational development. This would eventually lead toward their awareness of the need and increase their involvement with their children.

The seminar consisted of four specific areas: (1) The Introduction: Parental Involvement; (2) The Initiation: Benefits of being an involved in the child's education; (3) The Inspiration: How God views being and involved parent; (4) The Information: Ways one can be effective in the involvement process. Each one of the participants was given packets with information about each area discussed during the four- week seminar.

Evaluation of Data

An evaluation of the data was conducted by one of the writer's context associates as well as an outside evaluator. The writer only identified the participants by numbers to the outside evaluator in order to maintain the participant's confidentiality. Both context associates and the outsider felt like they were both convicted due to their own lack of involvement in their children's educational development. The outsider mentioned how

their own involvement was limited to just making sure their children completed homework assignments. Both asked if they could have copies of the information with suggestions mentioning how parents can become more involved in their children's education.

The Planning Process

During the model's initial stages of planning, the writer identified professional resources that would be of benefit in his formulation of the training model and the best possible process of its implementation. In the book entitled, "You and Your Action Research Project," Jean McNiff, Pameal Lomax, and Jack Whitehead, was very instrumental. The authors denoted several critical movements to utilize when constructing and administering questionnaires. Here are a few of those steps:

- Decide what information you need to find. Construct your questionnaires or use one that has already been piloted. Put the instructions for completing the questionnaire at the top of the paper.
- Have a clear policy regarding confidentiality and share this with your respondents.
- Pay attention to detail, content and appearance.

- Pilot the questionnaire. Try it out on a few people, and invite their criticism. Try and analyze the responses to see if it is giving you the sort of data you want.¹

The parental involvement model consisted of four specific stages. The writer discovered that operating in these stages was beneficial in the functioning and order of the project.

Stage One of the Project

This project consisted of four stages. Stage One consisted of the recruitment of participants as well as the Context Associates. An initial letter was distributed to all of the participating parents and Context Associates during a meeting after the morning worship service. The meeting gave the writer an opportunity to share his thoughts about the outline and administration of the project. A confidentiality statement was given to all of the participants. This letter ensured that everything that was mentioned in the sessions would be in complete confidence. The letter to the participating parents is located in Appendix A. The letter to the Context Associates is located in Appendix B. A list of the Context Associates is provided in Appendix C. The Confidentiality Statement is located in Appendix D.

¹ Davydd Greenwood and Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*: (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998), 4.

Stage Two of the Project

Stage Two consisted of the administration of the pre survey to all of the participating parents using the qualitative research method. The questions measured the participants' understanding of the importance of parental involvement. An additional biblical/theological questionnaire was administered as well. The questions measured the participants' biblical/theological views of God, the evil one, and the Church in reference to parents' involvement in the lives of their children. Pre and post-test questions are located in Appendix E. The biblical/theological survey is located in Appendix F.

Stage Three of the Project

Stage Three consisted of a series of sessions that addressed the need for parental involvement in the education of their children. The sessions were presented in Power Point format. The PowerPoint presentation was also distributed in hard copy so the participants could have access to write notes on each topic discussed. The participants were given various statistics of parental involvement and children's educational achievement. The writer also preached four sermons that exposed the positive consequences of parental involvement as well as the negative consequences of the lack thereof. Outlines from the sermons are located in Appendix G. The participants were also given strategies to how they can increase their level of involvement in their child's education. Handouts for the four sessions are located in Appendix H.

Stage Four of the Project

Stage Four consisted of a post-test with questions that was administered by the writer. The questions served as follow-up tool to the strategies given to how parents can become more involved in their child's education. The questions were the same as the pretest that was administered during the first session. The questions are located in Appendix E. A Certificate of Completion was given to the participants shortly after the posttest was administered. The certificate of completion is located in Appendix I.

The writer also conducted interviews with some of the participants following the sessions. The participants felt more at ease during these moments than they did during the session.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the writer's methodology and design of the model used in the project. It also discussed the goals and reasons for choosing the site for the project. This chapter also lifted up the data collection methodologies, which consisted of a pre and post-test questionnaire and an evaluation form. Additional information in narrative format regarding the analysis of the questionnaires as well as the implementation of the model is discussed in the following chapter (The Field Experience).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT FIELD EXPERIENCE

The Church as a whole, especially within the African American community, is at a position where there are many resources available to tackle the social injustices that currently exist. It is conclusive that the writer along with the congregation will demonstrate the Gospel truth as well as get involved in the education of the community it serves.

In Chapter Five the writer has provided what happened during the implementation of the seminar. He also discusses the data collection methods used and the data analysis objectives of the seminar. Finally the results of the project will be discussed in the chapter.

Due to the fact that the researcher's church facility will not be completed until May of 2007, he had to set up a meeting with the Property Manager of his mother's church, Eastern Star Church, to obtain permission to use their facility for his workshops that were held on Mondays. The researcher chose this site because the church he pastors has Bible Study services that are taught here on Thursday nights. The church also provided the space, equipment, and other resources needed for instruction.

Data Collection

Data was collected through documents and videotaping. This proved extremely helpful in obtaining the language and words used by the participants. Surveys and a questionnaire were administered during the project. The researcher designed and distributed a biblical/theological questionnaire designed to examine the biblical and theological views of the participants. He believes strongly that the way participants address the issue of the lack of parental involvement in children's education is predicated on their Christian beliefs. The questionnaire focused on the people's views toward God, the evil one, the church, parental involvement and the lack thereof. There were fifteen questions on the questionnaire and also included demographics such as the gender, age and ethnicity of the members in the group.

The researcher administered a pre/post survey designed to probe the involvement and beliefs of participants. The surveys covered the age, gender, ethnicity, marital status of group and number of children. The survey helped to provide the participation level and range of the participants. It consisted of twenty-three questions. Eleven questions were yes/no questions; twelve were open-ended questions. He made sure the language of the survey was easy for the participants to comprehend. He believed the simpler the language the easier it would be for participants to read. The survey aided the researcher in finding out whether participants had patterns of involvement with their children at home, school, or in other places.

The data collected from the project consisted of a pre and post survey, a biblical/theological questionnaire, and an evaluation summary form. All of the

information gleaned from the surveys and questionnaire provided a vehicle to which the writer analyzed and compared the responses on pre and post surveys to the same questions. The questions to the pre and post surveys are in Appendix E.

The writer initially began to compile and format all the necessary materials that would be utilized during the seminar. This allowed him to reconnect with the material of this subject matter by putting together the components of the seminar. The experience began with a statement of recruitment spoken by the writer to the congregation he pastors. Out of forty-five responses, parents of ten children were chosen to participate in the seminar. Having secured permission from the Pastor of Eastern Star Church, the writer began an overview session with Context Associates, which allowed for expressions or concerns before the actual seminar began.

The parental involvement seminar commenced on Monday, April 30, 2007 and lasted for four consecutive Mondays until Monday, May 21, 2007. Each session lasted two hours. The seminar went from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Dinner was provided and served at 6:30 p.m. each night. Child care was also provided by the leader of the New Beginnings Fellowship Church's Children's Ministry.

Each night attendance was recorded and seminars were both audio taped and videotaped. All participants were provided with name- tags to assist the writer and others to get to know each other on a personal value and for the writer to speak personally to the participants. At the beginning of each class, the writer provided participants with a three ring binder which included a pencil, paper, and handouts that pertained to each lesson that in the seminar. (Appendix H) The binders also had color tabs for easy recognition of the lessons and space for taking notes. The format for each night was as follows:

- A. Objectives
- B. Initiation
- C. Introduction
- D. Inspiration
- E. Information
- F. Questions and Answers
- G. Closing Prayer

Day One Session

Day one started with dinner. The writer arrived at 6:50 p.m. to walk around and greet each participant. Some of the participants began to share how much they appreciated the opportunity to be a part of the seminar. After opening up the session with prayer, the writer gave the participants the opportunity to read and sign the Confidential Non-Disclosure Agreement (Appendix D). They all took advantage of the opportunity. Only one of participant did not attend the first seminar. The writer uncovered the parents to some statistical data and consequences that occur when parents are not involved in the education of their children. This information is found in Appendix H. The writer administered the pretest along with a biblical/theological questionnaire to the parents in order to identify their levels of involvement as well as their thoughts in their children's education. One parent had commented on how convicting it is to simply read the survey. She jokingly stated, "Pastor, do we have to be honest with our answers?" The class started laughing as if they related with the woman's statement.

After the participants have completed the survey the writer engaged in a discussion about his journey and why he was led to address this particular need in his church. This information can be found in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. The group seemed understanding of the importance of this topic by the way they focus their attention on the writer.

The group then engaged in a biblical discussion on parental involvement. During this time, the writer discussed parental involvement from a biblical perspective and discussed various reasons why the lack thereof poses as a problem biblically. This information was gleaned from the Chapter 3 of this dissertation. He then moved into the sermon that he preached entitled, “The Miracle of Motherhood” (Appendix G). The group seemed inspired and motivated by the message. The group was then exposed to various methods that parents could use in order for them to become more involved in their children’s education (found in Appendix H). Only one couple came in to the seminar ten minutes late that caused the writer to reemphasize some of the earlier material covered. Lastly, the class had prayer and dismissed. The group was reminded to leave their name tags on the table so they could be available form them for the following session.

Participant Demographics

The group consisted of all African Americans; four were males and nine were females. Out of thirteen participants, eight of them were under 40 years of age. There were four who were over 40 years of age and one did not respond to this question. The participants were parents of 3rd and 4th grade students. Out of the thirteen participants,

seven participants were parents of 3rd graders (54%), three participants were parents of 4th graders (23%), and the remaining three (23%) did not respond to this question.

Results of the Pre-survey

As previously mentioned, participants were asked to complete the pre-survey. This survey was to probe the level of participation and level of involvement in their children's education. Here are the results of the survey:

Question number one on the pre survey identified the number of hours a day the parent spends with their children's homework. Out of thirteen participants, eight (61%) of them spend under two hours a day with their children's homework. The remaining five (39%) of them spend two or more hours a day with their children's homework.

Question number two identified the number of times per month the participant visits their children's classroom. Out of thirteen participants, six (46%) of them visited their children's classroom once a month, four (36%) of them visited their children's classroom two or more times a month, and the remaining three (23%) do not visit their children's classroom monthly.

Question number three identified those who have taken their children to the library this year. Out of thirteen participants, eight (62%) of them have taken their children to the library this year, and the remaining five (38%) did not take their children to the library this year.

Question number four identified those who have taken their children to the museum or a historic site during the school year. Out of thirteen participants, eight (62%)

of them have taken their children to the museum or a historic site, and the remaining five (38%) did not take their children this year.

Question number five identified the number of times this year one has taken their children to the movies. Out of thirteen participants, nine (70%) of them have taken their children to the movies two or more times, two (15%) of them has taken their children to the movies one time this year, 1 participant did not take their children to the movies this year, and one participant's did not answer the question.

Question number six identified how the participants' children scored on their (Indiana State Test for Educational Progress) assessment. Out of thirteen participants, eight (62%) of the participants' children passed in the area of English, Math, and Science, three (23%) of the participants' children failed in the area of English, Math, and Science, and the remaining two's (15%) answer did not apply.

Question number seven identified the number of parents whose children have been reported to the office for behavior issues during the school year. Out of thirteen participants, four (31%) of the participants' children have been reported to the office for behavior issues, and the remaining nine (69%) of the participants' children have not.

Question number eight identified those who have a time set at home where everything in their house goes off and the focus is on reading or studying. Out of thirteen participants, eight (62%) of them have set time at home where everything goes off and the focus in on reading or studying, and the remaining five (38%) of the participants have not.

Question number nine identified those parents who required study time for their children. All of the participants required study time for their children.

Question number ten identified those who are members of a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Out of thirteen participants, three (23%) of them are members of the PTA; and the remaining nine (69%) are not members of the PTA.

Question number eleven identified those who have volunteered for any of their children's field trips this school year. Out of thirteen participants, eight (62%) of them have volunteered for field trips, and the remaining five (38%) have not volunteered for any field trips.

Question number twelve identified those who have visited their children's classroom this school year. Out of thirteen participants, eleven (85%) of them have visited their children's classroom this year, and the remaining two (15%) have not.

Question number thirteen identified those who have contacted their children's teacher for reasons other than behavior issues. Out of thirteen participants, eleven (85%) of them have contacted their children's teacher, and the remaining two (15%) have not.

Question number fourteen identified those who are home in time after work to spend an hour with their children's study. Out of thirteen participants, twelve (92%) of them are home in time to spend an hour with their children's study, and the remaining one (8%) is not.

Question number fifteen identified those who have a designated time for their children to be in bed during on a school night. Out of thirteen participants, eleven (85%) of them do have a designated time for their children to be in bed on a school night, and the remaining two (15%) do not.

Summary of Pretest

After gathering the data from the pretest, the writer came to the conclusion that the majority of the participants have displayed some degree of parental involvement. The writer also recognized that the participants who have displayed a great deal of parental involvement have seen a moderate deal of success in their children's education. Those who have displayed the lack thereof have seen their children decline in their education.

Results of the Biblical and Theological Questionnaire

As previously mentioned, participants were asked to complete a biblical/theological questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to probe the biblical and theological assumptions of the participants. Here are the results of that questionnaire:

Out of thirteen participants, eight of them were under 40 years of age. There were four who were over 40 years of age and there was one unknown; 31% of the participants make up a single parent home and the remaining 68% made up a two-parent home.

Question number one identified those who believe that God desires for their children to excel educationally. All thirteen of the participants answered that they believe God desire for their children to excel educationally.

Question number two identified those who believe that God desires to see their children failing in school. All thirteen of the participants answered that they do not believe God desires for their children to fail in school.

Question number three identified those who believe that failure in education is a trick of Satan. Out of the thirteen participants, nine (69%) of the participants believe that

failure in education is a trick of Satan; the remaining four (31%) of the participants believe that failure in education is not.

Question number four identified those who believe that children's failure in education is due to a lack of parental involvement. Out of the thirteen participants, ten (77%) of them believe that children's failure in education is due to a lack of parental involvement; the remaining three (23%) of the participants believe that their failure in education is not.

Question number five identified those who believe that children's excelling in education is the sole responsibility of God. All thirteen of the participants answered they do not believe that children's excelling in education is solely God's responsibility.

Question number six identified those who believe that children's excelling in education is the sole responsibility of the individual. All thirteen of the participants answered they do not believe that children's excelling in education is solely the individual's responsibility.

Question number seven identified those who believe that children's excelling in education is sole responsibility of God and the individual. Out of the thirteen participants, nine (69%) of them believe that education is not solely on the responsibility of God and the individual; the remaining four (31%) believe that it does.

Question number eight identified those who object to worldly strategies in getting their children to excel educationally. Out of the thirteen participants only two (15%) of them objected. The remaining eleven (85%) had no problem with it.

Question number nine identified those who believe in praying with their children concerning their education. All thirteen participants answered that they believe in praying with their children concerning their education.

Question number ten identified those who believe that if one prays with their child(ren), God will grant the child(ren) with better grades. Out of the thirteen participants, seven (54%) of them believe that praying with their children will get God to grant them with better grades; the remaining six (46%) do not believe this concept.

Question number eleven identified those who believe that the bible alone holds the answers for children excelling educationally. Out of the thirteen participants, ten (77%) of them believe that the bible alone does not hold the answers for children excelling educationally; the remaining three (23%) believe the bible does alone hold the answers.

Question number twelve identified those who believe that a workshop that teaches both biblical and secular strategies can bring about positive change in the involvement of its participants. Out of thirteen participants, twelve (92%) of them believe that this type of workshop can bring about positive change; the remaining one (8%) believes that a workshop can not bring about positive change.

Question number thirteen identified those who believe it is normal for African-American Christian parents to be involved in their children's education. Out of thirteen participants, eleven (85%) of them believe that it is normal for African American Christian parents to be involved in their children's education; the remaining two (15%) believes that it is not normal.

Question number fourteen identified those who think that black churches in their community do enough to help parents get involved in their children's education. Out of thirteen participants, nine (69%) of them think that the black churches in their community do not do enough to help parents get involved in their children's education; the remaining four (31%) think that the black churches in their community does.

Question number fifteen identified those who think the Black church needs to focus more on children's education. Out of thirteen participants, eleven (85%) of them think that the Black church need to focus more on children's education; the remaining two (15%) think that the black church does not need to focus more on children's education.

Conclusions from Questionnaire

Based on the answers on the biblical/theological questionnaire, this writer drew several conclusions about the participants of this seminar. African American Christians in this seminar tend to believe that God wants them to be actively involved in the educational development of their children; Christians tend to place the responsibilities of their children's development more on themselves than on God; Christians tend to believe worldly strategies can assist in becoming more involved in the educational development of their children.

Day Two Session

Day two started with dinner. The children of the participants were directed to their area with the ministry workers. After dinner was served, the writer began the session in

prayer. It was reemphasized that the purpose of the session and the passion for children's educational growth and development. All of the participants were in attendance. The people in the group seemed more comfortable than previous night of sharing. They commented on how delicious the food was. One participant made the comment that they were now sleepy, and asked if he could be excused for the night. The group laughed. The writer utilized the same structure that was initially set for the duration of the entire seminar. This session placed emphasis on the power and importance of a father's role in the educational development of their children. In the sermon for the night, the writer talked about the part that fathers' play in their children's lives. The message was entitled, "Not If Daddy Has Anything to do With It". (Appendix G) The group was introduced to see more strategies that can better assist their children in their educational development. Some of the participants, by the look on their faces, were convicted that they were ignoring some of these strategies that could be beneficial to their children. This session placed more weight on the relationships that the parents should have with the teachers and administrators. It was also shared that the perception of the teacher cannot be portrayed in a negative light at home, and expect for the child to have a good perception of them at school. Some of the participants admitted that the only time they mentioned their children's teacher's name was during moments when they were criticizing them. When the writer opened the floor for questions and saw that no one had any, he closed the session in prayer. The participants were again asked to leave their name tags on the table for the next time of meeting.

Day Three Session

Session three started about five minutes late, because the people serving the food were late preparing the meals. The writer made the necessary adjustments to make sure that the session began at a reasonable hour. There was one parent who was absent, but her husband was there to take notes and participate. This session was geared toward encouraging parents who may sometimes become discouraged when their children are not reaching their highest potential and at the rate desired. The message was entitled, “Do You Believe It Can Get Better?” Through the facial expressions of the participants, the message seemed to have been encouraging. More strategies were provided for the parents to reemphasize the importance of parents stressing the significance of school to their children. During the question and answer session, the participants spent about fifteen minutes expressing their gratitude for this session. They mentioned the comfort in knowing that it is normal for them to have moments when gearing children educationally become at times a challenge. This session was beneficial because it not only provided instruction to the participants, it identified problems they may face when dealing with their children. The writer closed the session in prayer. At the end of this segment many participants remained after the session to share more intimate concerns about some of the challenges they have in the area of parenting as well as to have personal prayer.

Day Four Session

Day four was the final night of the workshop and all were in attendance. While dinner was being served, the writer sat, ate, and conversed with the participants. The group seemed to have been more relaxed and familiar with each other as well as with the

session, and they began to dialogue with each other more than the previous sessions. After dinner one of the Context Associates opened the session in prayer. The writer began with a review of the material from the previous nights. This night the writer took another approach and shared with the participants the challenges and consequences that can occur when parents are not actively involved in the educational development of their children. This information was gleaned from the material from Chapter Three of the writer's dissertation.

Results from the Post-survey

In observing the results from the post-survey, the writer observed a noticeable improvement in the participants' understanding of parental involvement in a child's education? There were several common threads that emerged throughout the parental involvement seminar. The first common thread was the participants' increased commitment to spend more consistent time with their children's homework assignments. The second common thread was the participant's commitment to developing a better relationship with their children's teachers. The third common thread was the participants' understanding that it is a responsibility as a child of God to become more involved in their children's lives. The final common thread was a desire to continue to improve in their involvement in the children's education after this seminar has come to a close. The results to the post survey are presented in graph form located in Appendix J.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSIONS

As this writer reflects on the experience of the ministry project, the thoughts of life when entering the Doctor of Ministry program at United Theological Seminary rests at the forefront of one's mind. It is upon the thoughts of the writer's experiences that birthed a high level of appreciation for the challenges and rewards that came with this educational experience.

One prior experience that was reflected upon was the writer's education in college. Having earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education, the writer once thought that it would not have any utilization in the writer's new ministry as a Senior pastor. It was during the journey at United Theological Seminary to concluding the final chapter of this document that the bridge was drawn, and God's purpose for the Bachelors degree was fulfilled. It was the writer's undergraduate journey that served as the fuel to accomplishing this project.

The purpose of this model of ministry "Empowering Parents to Become Actively Involved in the Educational Development of their Children" was to empower and equip parents with the necessary tools for them to actively involve themselves in the educational development of their children. This project was intended to show the true

value of a ministry that encourages parents to get the tools necessary to understand the importance of becoming involved in their children's education.

There are a few reasons why the writer selected this subject for research and implementation. The first reason was because of the writer's passion in regards to the educational field. As a graduate with an elementary education degree and a former pastor of youth and children in the local church served as reasons for such passions and interests. It was because of these passions that made the challenging journey through United Theological Seminary less stressful.

The second reason for selecting this topic was the lack of parental involvement within the context of the local church. The desire for their children's spiritual development was identified when parents would bring their children to church and get them involved with activities and programs to enhance their children's spiritual development. However, some of the parents have never taken their children to a museum or to a historic site. The majority of them only called their children's teacher when there were concerns about their children's behavior or with their academics. The writer also noticed that some of the people in the study expressed that they did not know how they can become more involved in their children's secular education.

The third reason why the writer selected this subject for research and implementation is because the writer could not find many churches that have implemented a ministry that empowers and equips parents with the tools necessary to become adequately involved in their children's education. The writer believes that this model can be duplicated in churches throughout this country. The final reason for

selecting this model is that it gives the participants an arena of being comfortable yet the accountability is present.

In summary, the intent of this model was to inform and empower parents within the New Beginnings Fellowship Church to become actively involved in the educational development of their children. The goal of the model was to move parents from not only supporting the spiritual needs, but the educational needs of their children.

The project's three stages were developed by the writer and will be evaluated for its effectiveness. The first stage was the recruitment and the administration of the pretest survey and biblical/theological questionnaire. The questions provided the writer with the participants' thoughts and knowledge about their levels of involvement as well as their children's standing in school. The questionnaire provided the writer with the biblical and theological views of parental involvement. These questions allowed the participants to see if there was a connection between God, and the church and children's need for parental involvement.

The second stage of the project was the implementation of the four session parental involvement seminar. The session provided a clear understanding of the need for parental involvement, the benefits of parental involvement and the negative consequences of the lack thereof. The sessions also provided practical tools for the participants to use in becoming more involved in their children's educational development.

The final stage of the model was the administering of the posttest survey. This survey provided the writer with the necessary data to determine if addressing the need for parental involvement was achieved.

The model proved to be informative and helpful to the people involved in the model. There were many participants of the focus group who expressed their gratitude to writer for allowing them to take part in the seminar. Some of them expressed how much the seminar helped them to not take for granted their children's educational development. Others expressed how this seminar had helped them in being better, supportive parents.

Suggestions for the Future

Despite the success of the model, there are areas of the project that could have been done differently to improve its overall quality. It is with the new knowledge that four suggestions are made and will be incorporated into the model for future use and implementation.

The first suggestion offered is to adjust the seminar from a four-week sequence to a six to eight week sequence. The participants were given a lot of information and it may have been beneficial if some of the material were divided into smaller segments. This would have given the participants more time to digest the information given. The writer preached a sermon each session that related to that evening's topic. Further, he presented statistics that illustrated consequences or benefits of parental involvement in their child's education. Strategies were offered to help them become more active in their child's education. The sermon could have been given on a different night to give the participants more time to reflect on the homily.

The second suggestion would be to invite school- teachers and other administrators to address the participants. The writer mentioned to the participants the importance of having a healthy working relationship with teachers and administrators. It

may be more effective if a school- teacher shared his or her experiences of having a good relationship with a student's parent and the struggles and frustrations of not having a working relationship with them.

The third suggestion is to have lighter meals. The participants were served heavy meals and desserts. This caused a many of the participants to become sleepy causing the writer to make more frequent breaks so the group would stay alert during the sessions.

The fourth suggestion is to allow more time for the participants to interact with each other during the sessions. This would allow the participants to share their concerns and encourage each other more than they did during the sessions.

During the administering of the project, the writer observed a strong desire from the participants to do more in helping their children excel in their educational achievements. The participants continued to thank the writer for exposing them to ideas and methods that would assist in their children's academics. For the first time, the writer felt the same type of excitement towards children's education as it was during the time spent in college.

Summary

The writer observed that though the participants possessed a strong desire to be more involved in their children's education, they were not aware of the various ways of becoming more involved. It was their lack of awareness that infused the writer to create this ministry project resulting in a more heightened awareness of the need for parental involvement.

Due to the overall success of this ministry project, it is the writer's intention to explore the possibility of not only creating a ministry at the local church where the writer pastors, but to share this model with churches in the community and ultimately around the nation. It is the writer's belief that most, if not all churches, shares the common struggle and concern that the parents are not participating in the educational development of their children. This writer's opinion is that this is because they lack the knowledge and tool to be an effective advocate. This project can be addressed to a larger scope of ministry.

Conclusion

This project increases the opportunity for children to reach their highest potential. It is with this thought that the writer reflects on the words of Jesus as recorded in scripture: *"Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."* (Mk 10:14)

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS



New Beginnings Fellowship Church
8850 E. 106th Street • Fishers, IN 46038
Tel: 317-913-3711 • 317-913-3713 (fax)
www.NewBeginningsFC.org
James Anthony Jackson, Senior Pastor

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Welcome to the New Beginnings Fellowship Church's **Parental Involvement Seminar!**

Have you ever wondered why some children are academically superior and well-adjusted to the rigors of school? In many cases, this scenario did not "just happen" by chance. To enjoy success, there are many key factors involved, including good teachers, challenging curriculum, home conditions that are conducive to learning, a caring school environment, the student's aptitude and attitude, and **parental involvement**. Although each component is important, one cannot truly measure the far-reaching impact that parents have had on their children. From taking interest in their child's schoolwork, interacting with teachers, communicating well with the child, supporting the child in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities, etc., the parent conveys the importance of education by his/her vested interest.

The objective of the **Parental Involvement Seminar** is to introduce parents with the necessary tools needed to maximize their parental involvement. You will participate in discussions and engage in informative and inspirational sessions that will assist you with the applying the lessons learned within the seminar.

I believe the **Parental Involvement Seminar** will serve as a seed of motivation and provide Godly direction that will generate a positive influence on your child's academic performance.

I sincerely thank you for your interest and taking time out of your busy schedules to participate! I could not make this happen without you!

Sincerely yours,

James Anthony Jackson, M. Div.
 Senior Pastor

"Where the Lord is Worshipped and His People are Changed!"

APPENDIX B
EVALUATION SUMMARY

Evaluation Summary

Parental Involvement Seminar Pastor James Anthony Jackson, M. Div., Facilitator

Thank you for participating in the New Beginnings Fellowship Church, Parental Involvement Seminar. We pray that you were blessed by attending the seminar and that the insight you've gained will be a blessing not only to you, but to your children, their educators and other parents as well.

To better assist us with planning future events, please complete and return the evaluations below.

The responses are based on a scale: 1 (Strongly agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree).

Circle the appropriate response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
1 The seminar met my overall expectations	1	2	3	4	5
2 The time allotted for the sessions was adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
3 The speaker appeared knowledgeable of the topics and presented the material in a way that was easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
4 The facility was conducive to my learning.	1	2	3	4	5
5 I would attend future seminars and encourage others to attend.	1	2	3	4	5
6 I believe that my relationship with my child, his/her school and/or his/her educators will be strengthened as a result of the knowledge gained during the seminar.	1	2	3	4	5
7 The topics covered during the seminar were relevant to me and my child(ren).	1	2	3	4	5

- 8 I would like to see the following topics covered during the future seminars?

- 9 I would make the following suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of future seminars:

Thank you!

APPENDIX C
CONTEXT ASSOCIATES

1. Jennifer Collins
2. Caryl West
3. Alicia West
4. Tara Jackson
5. Katina Sumner
6. Angela Collins
7. Angela Cruse
8. Sandra Kieth

APPENDIX D
CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Confidential
Non-Disclosure Agreement
Parental Involvement Seminar
Pastor James Anthony Jackson, M. Div., Facilitator

I _____, agree to abide by the following **Parental Involvement Seminar** non-disclosure agreements:

It is understood and agreed to that participants of the **Parental Involvement Seminar** may provide certain information that is and must be kept confidential. To ensure the protection of such information, it is agreed that:

1. Those hearing, receiving and/or obtaining this confidential information shall not disclose the confidential information to others or use for any purpose any part of the confidential information disclosed.
2. Those hearing, receiving and/or obtaining this confidential information agree to maintain and protect the confidentiality of all participants of the **Parental Involvement Seminar**.

WHEREFORE, the parties acknowledge that they have read and understand this Confidential Non-Disclosure Agreement and voluntarily accept the duties and obligations set forth herein.

Name
(Print):

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX E
PRE AND POST TEST SURVEYS

PRETEST SURVEY

Parental Involvement Seminar
Pastor James Anthony Jackson, M. Div., Facilitator

Age: _____

Gender (Please circle): Male Female

Ethnicity (Please circle): Black White Other

How many hours do you spend with your child(ren's) homework?

½ 1 2 3 or more

How many times do you visit your child(ren's) class per month?

1 2 3 4 or more

Have you taken your child(ren) to the public library this year?

Yes No

If yes, how many times?

1 2 3 4 or more

Have you taken your child(ren) to a museum or historic site this school year?

Yes No

If yes, how many times?

1 2 3 4 or more

How many times have you taken your child(ren) to the movies this year?

1 2 3 4 or more

How did your child(ren) score during the ISTEP?

_____	English (Please circle):	Pass	Fail
_____	Math (Please circle):	Pass	Fail
_____	Science (Please circle):	Pass	Fail

Have your child(ren) been reported to the office for behavior issues?

Yes No

If yes, how many times this school year?

1 2 3 4 or more

Do you have a time set at home where everything goes off and the focus is on reading or studying?

Yes No

Are there set hours for your child(ren) to watch TV?

Yes No

If so, how many hours?

1 2 3 4 or more

Do you require study time for your child(ren)?

Yes

No

If so, how many
hours?

1

2

3

4 or more

How consistent is your study time?

Daily

_____ times a week

Are you a member of the PTA?

Yes

No

Have you volunteered for any field trips this school year?

Yes

No

If yes, how many times?

1

2

3

4 or more

Have you visited your child(ren's) classroom this year?

Yes

No

If yes, how many
times?

1

2

3

4 or more

For what reason?

Have you contacted your child(ren's) teacher for any other reason besides the child's behavior?

Yes

No

If yes, for what
reason?

Are you the only parent in the home?

Yes

No

Are you at home in enough time after work to spend an hour with your child(ren)?

Yes

No

Do your child(ren) have a designated bed time?

Yes

No

Post Survey Questionnaire

Parental Involvement Seminar
Pastor James Anthony Jackson, M. Div., Facilitator

As we've learned within the seminar, the more you get involved in a child's education, the better the child does . . . in every way. They get better grades and test scores; they show better behavior and attitude. They are more likely to graduate from high school, go on to college and grow up to be more successful. And your involvement helps them make it happen. Now that you've attended the 4-week **Parental Involvement Seminar**, please share with us your views, based on what was shared within the seminar.

How many hours do you spend with your child(ren's) homework?

$\frac{1}{2}$ 1 2 3 or more

Is this an increase from the start of the seminar?

Yes No

How many times do you visit your child(ren's) class per month?

1 2 3 4 or more

Is this an increase from the start of the seminar?

Yes No

Are you taking your child(ren) to the public library this year?

Yes No

If yes, how many times?

1 2 3 4 or more

Is this answer different from what you provided in the initial survey?

Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Have you taken your child(ren) to a museum or historic site this school year?

Yes No

If yes, how many
times?

1 2 3 4 or more

Is this answer different from what you provided in the initial survey?

Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Since this seminar, have you set a time at home where everything goes off and the focus is on reading or studying?

Yes

No

Is this answer different from what you provided in the initial survey?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain:

Since the seminar, are there set hours for your child(ren) to watch TV?

Yes

No

If so, how many hours?

1

2

3

4 or more

Is this an increase or a decrease from your initial answer?

Increase

Decrease

If your answer is different from the answer you provided in the initial survey, please explain:

Since the seminar, do you require study time for your child(ren)?

Yes

No

If so, how many hours?

1

2

3

4 or more

Is this answer different from what you provided in the initial survey?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain:

Since the seminar, has your child's study time increased?

Yes

No

Please share what impact(s) the seminar will have on your involvement, if any.

Did you gain any helpful insights from the seminar?

APPENDIX F
BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Parental Involvement Seminar

Pastor James Anthony Jackson, M. Div., Facilitator

Age: _____

Number of parents in the home _____

Ethnicity (Please circle): Black White Other

To better assess your Biblical and Theological viewpoint, please answer the following questions:

Do you believe that God desires your child(ren) to excel educationally?

Yes No

Do you believe that God desires to see your child(ren) failing in school?

Yes No

Do you believe that failure in education is a trick of Satan?

Yes No

Do you believe that children's failure in education is due to a lack of parental involvement?

Yes No

Do you believe that children's excelling in education is the sole responsibility of God?

Yes No

Do you believe that children's excelling in education is the sole responsibility of the individual?

Yes No

Do you believe that children's excelling in education is the responsibility of God and the individual?

Yes No

Do you object to worldly strategies in getting your child(ren) to excel educationally?

Yes No

Do you believe in praying with your child(ren) concerning their education?

Yes No

Do you believe that if one prays with their child(ren), God will grant the child(ren) better grades?

Yes No

Does the Bible alone hold the answers for children excelling educationally?

Yes No

Do you believe that a workshop that teaches both Biblical and secular strategies can bring about positive change in the education of its participants?

Yes

No

Is it normal for African-American Christian parents to be involved in their child(ren)'s education?

Yes

No

Do you think that Black churches in your community do enough to help parents get involved in their child(ren)'s education?

Yes

No

Do you think the Black church need to focus more on children's education?

Yes

No

APPENDIX G
SERMON OUTLINES FROM SESSIONS

“The Miracle of Motherhood”

Exodus 2:1-10

There is a sad reality that has resonated in the society in which we live. It has become so contrary to what our God desires to transpire in our lives. It is the operation of failure. Failure has become a virus in our society. It has plagued us so that the belief that, “we are the head and not the tail” has become almost non-existent. This virus has infected men and women of all ages and ethnicities. What saddens me even more is when the failure attaches itself to our children before they have the chance to try.

- I. A System of Demonic Rejection
 - a. Against children of purpose
 - b. Ultimately against a society with purpose

- II. A Sister Who has a Divine Perception
 - a. It was not a systematic view
 - b. It did not lead to demonic action
 - i. How momma saw him
 - ii. How momma treated him
 - iii. How momma protected him
 - iv. How momma released him

- III. Success through Divine Intervention
 - a. God works through coincidence
 - b. God uses the most unlikely people to aid to one’s deliverance

- IV. Satisfaction Through Divine Restitution
 - a. Momma got her baby back *better* than he was before she released him
 - b. Momma got her baby and compensation for her faithfulness

There’s a Miracle in Motherhood!

“Not if Daddy Has Something to Do With It!”
Mark 5:22-43

We are living in a society in which it has become somewhat normal and acceptable to label men as dead-beat dads. The sad reality is the fact that there are so many men who have rejected their responsibility of taking care of the children they’ve been blessed to have. The results of these practices lie in the failure of our children.

Though this is the reality that has plagued our context, there is also a reality that there are men who have made the decision not to allow their children to die, as they watch and do nothing to aid in their survival.

- A. A Child at the Point of Death
 - a. Struck with a sickness that is tainting her future
 - b. Struck with a sickness that has paralyzed her
 - c. Struck with a sickness that had confined her
- B A Father at the Point of Despair
 - a. Showed Humility with the Lord
 - b. Showed Resilience against one’s own reputation
 - c. Showed Perseverance against the negativity of the circumstance.
- C A Savior in the Position to Deliver
 - a. He was invited to The House
 - b. He dispatched the negativity that surrounded The House
 - c. He delivered the child in The House

“Do You Believe It Can Get Any Better?”
Mark 9:17-25

- A. The Challenges to a Parent’s Belief
 - a. A Child’s Behavior
 - i. He has a nasty mouth (foam)
 - ii. He becomes resentful (gnashing teeth)
 - iii. He refuses to move (rigid)
 - iv. He runs in dangerous places
 - b. A Church’s Failure
 - i. Failing the child
 - ii. Fussing at the wrong people
 - iii. Failed in their prayer time
- B. The Change in the People
 - a. People had to stop having unnecessary arguments
 - b. Parents had to be honest
 - c. People had to resume praying
- C. The Cure Jesus Brings
 - a. He rebukes the Father
 - b. He rebukes the Followers
 - c. He rebukes the boy’s faults

“The Danger of Doing Nothing” II Samuel 13

We are living in a society where the world has become the leading instructor in a child’s development. It is now up to the parents to fulfill their God-given responsibility and deposit the necessary seeds in our children that they may have the foundations to function in such an oppressive society.

Proverbs 22:6

“Train a child in the way he/she should go and when they are old they will not turn from it.”

A. You End Up With Dysfunction

- a. They take bad advice from friends (v.3)
- b. They are being driven by their desires (vs.1&2)
- c. They carry emotions that are not properly dealt with (v.22)

B. You End Up With Defilement

- a. They refuse to listen to reason (v.16)
- b. They ignore settings that are suspect (v.10)
- c. They operate with no accountability and give life threatening advice (v.28)

C. You End Up With Ultimate Devastation

- a. A Daughter whose life has been ruined (v.20)
- b. A Son who was set up for his destruction (v. 29)
- c. A Son who becomes disrespectful to his Father (v. 39)

All Because The Parent Did Nothing. . . (v. 7, 21, 25)

APPENDIX H
HANDOUTS FROM THE SESSIONS

Session 1



Get in the Game:

Empowering Parents to Become Involved in the Educational Development of Their Child

Parental Involvement Seminar





New Beginnings Fellowship Church
Pastor James A. Jackson, M. Div., Facilitator




Objective


- Different Views of Parental Involvement
- Engaging Discussions
- Application



Introduction

- The Importance of Parental Involvement





Family Involvement in Student Achievement



- Higher Grades
- Readily able to learn
- Decrease in complaints
- Stress the importance of education
- Address challenges
- Build relationships
- Support school programs



Family Involvement

- Students whose families are actively involved achieve higher grades, have better attendance, complete more homework, are better motivated, and are less likely to be cited for disciplinary action.





Family Involvement

- Students of involved families are more ready and able to learn and more likely to stay in school and benefit from high quality learning experiences.






Family Involvement

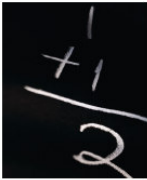
- Schools with strong family involvement also experienced a decrease in complaints from families about homework or the curriculum.





Family Involvement

- Many low-income, poorly educated families support learning by frequently talking with their children about school, careful monitoring activities, and clearly transmitting the belief that education is important.





Family Involvement

- Some families simply lack the resources, especially time, to be involved. When schools are aware of the issues facing families, they can better design family involvement activities that address and overcome the challenges that hinder families' involvement, such as lack of childcare or transportation.






Family Involvement

- Schools that succeed in engaging families from diverse backgrounds tend to focus on building trusting collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members.






Material taken from:
<http://www.ode.state.or.us/initiatives/familycommunity/files/researchfamilyvolstdnta-chieve.pdf>


Exodus 2: 1-10

- The Miracle of Motherhood





A System of Demonic Rejection





- Against children of purpose
- Against a society with purpose

A Sister Who has a Divine Perception

- It was not a systematic view
- It did not lead to demonic action
 - How momma saw him
 - How momma treated him
 - How momma protected him
 - How momma released him






Success through Divine Intervention

- God works through coincidence
- God uses unlikely people






Satisfaction through Divine Restitution

- Momma got her baby back better than he was before she released him!
- Momma got her baby back with compensation for her faithfulness!






There's a Miracle in Motherhood!






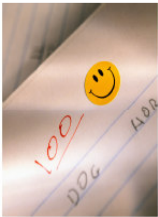
Educational Success

- Make sure the child arrives at school well rested
- Make sure the child has a good breakfast before school
- Plan to eat at least one meal each day as a family and use this time for positive family discussions







Educational Success



- Set a regular time and ensure a quiet place for the child to do homework
- Ask the child what he/she has learned in school each day
- Praise and encourage the child
- Limit his/her television, computer, videogame time



Questions & Answers



Session 2



Session Two
Get In the Game:

*Empowering Parents to Become Involved in
 the Educational Development of Their Child*

**Parental
 Involvement
 Seminar**





New Beginnings Fellowship Church
 Pastor James A. Jackson, M. Div., Facilitator




Objective & Introduction


- Importance of Parental Involvement
- Engaging Discussions
- Practical Application



Initiation

- The Importance of Parental Involvement







Family Involvement in Student Achievement



- Higher Test Scores
- Better attitudes & behavior
- Better school attendance
- Increase in completed homework
- Assists in helping child to focus more on efforts




Inspiration








Mark 5:22-43

- Not if Daddy Has Something to Do With It







A Child at the Point of Death



- Struck with:
 - A sickness that is tainting her future
 - A sickness that has paralyzed her
 - A sickness that had confined her



A Father at the Point of Despair




- Showed HUMILITY with the Lord
- Showed RESILIENCE against one's own reputation
- Showed PERSEVERANCE against the negativity of the circumstance




A Savior in a Position to Deliver

- He was invited to The House
- He dispatched the negativity that surrounded The House
- He delivered the child in The House





Information







Reinforce the Importance of School by:

- Speaking positively about your child's teachers & counselors
- Talking to your child about the benefits of education
- Making sure your child gets to school on time
- Attending open houses & parent/teacher conferences
- Answering/responding to notes, emails, and calls from your child's teacher





Questions & Answers



Session 3



Session Three
Get In the Game:

*Empowering Parents to Become Involved in
the Educational Development of Their Child*

**Parental
Involvement
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Pastor James A. Jackson, M. Div., Facilitator



Objective & Introduction


- Importance of Parental Involvement
- Engaging Discussions
- Practical Application





Initiation

- The Importance of Parental Involvement








Family Involvement in Student Achievement



- Less chance of being placed in special education
- Greater likelihood of graduating from high school
- Better chance of enrolling in post-secondary education
- Better sense of responsibility for handling homework assignments
- Better sense of accountability for tacking and completing assigned projects


Inspiration






Do You Believe It Can Get Better?

- Mark 9:17-25








The Challenge to a Parent's Belief


- A Child's Behavior
 - He has a nasty mouth (foam)
 - He has become resentful (gnashing teeth)
 - He refuses to move (rigid)
 - He runs in dangerous places





A Church's failure


- Failing the Child
- Fussing at the wrong people
- Failed in their prayer time



The Change in the People

- People had to stop having unnecessary arguments
- Parents had to be honest
- People had to resume praying






The Cure Jesus Brings



- He rebukes the Father
- He rebukes the Followers
- He rebukes the boy's Faults




Information








Reinforce the Importance of School by:

- Encourage reading and writing in the home
- Keep books, magazines, and newspapers in the home
- Take your child to the library at least twice a quarter
- Discuss what your child reads
- Read with your child
- Encourage your child to write notes and letters to other relatives
- Suggest that your child keep a journal





Questions & Answers





Session Four
Get In the Game:
*Empowering Parents to Become Involved in
the Educational Development of Their Child*

**Parental
Involvement
Seminar**



New Beginnings Fellowship Church
Pastor James A. Jackson, M. Div., Facilitator



Objective & Introduction

- Importance of Parental Involvement
- Engaging Discussions
- Practical Application





Initiation

- The Importance of Parental Involvement






Family Involvement in Student Achievement




- Higher grade point averages & scores on standardized tests
- Better social skills at school
- Better adaptation to the school environment
- Better attitudes toward teachers
- Greater confidence from teachers & other faculty and staff
- Increases the accountability towards teachers




Inspiration





The Danger of Doing Nothing


- II Samuel 13






Proverbs 22:6

- *Train a child in the way he/she should go and when they are old they will not turn from it.*




You End Up With Dysfunction




- They take bad advice from friends (v.3)
- They are being driven by their desires (vs. 1&2)
- They carry emotions that are not properly dealt with (v.22)

You End Up With Defilement


- They refuse to listen to reason (v.16)
- They ignore settings that are suspect (v.10)
- They operate with no accountability & give life-threatening advice (v.28)





You End Up in Ultimate Devastation

- A Daughter whose life has been ruined (v. 20)
- A Son who was set up for his destruction (v.29)
- A Son who became disrespectful to his Father (v.39)







All Because the Parent Did Nothing!

- Verses 7, 21 & 25





Information






The Overall Types of Involvement

- **Parenting**
 - Expressing expectations about child's education
 - Limiting entertainment time (television, radio, video games)
 - Supervising time, use, & behavior






The Overall Types of Involvement

- **Communicating**
 - Parent-initiated contacts about academic performance
 - School-initiated contacts about student academic programs






The Overall Types of Involvement

- **Supporting the School**
 - Volunteering at school and fund-raising activities








The Overall Types of Involvement


- Learning at Home
 - Academic lessons outside school (libraries, parks, historic sites, etc)
 - Music, dance, or other constructive activities
 - Discussions about school and plans for the future



The Overall Types of Involvement

- Decision-Making
 - Taking part in parent organizations (PTA, PTO)









The Overall Types of Involvement

- Collaborating with the Community
 - Ministry or church events
 - Museum visits
 - Scouts, Sports, etc.





Questions & Answers



APPENDIX I
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

AWARDED TO

FOR COMPLETION OF THE

Get in the Game

*Empowering Parents to Become Involved in the educational Development of
Their Child*

Presented this 21st Day of May 2007

by the

NEW BEGINNINGS FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

James Anthony Jackson, Senior Pastor

APPENDIX J
RESULTS FROM PRE AND POST SURVEY IN GRAPH FORM

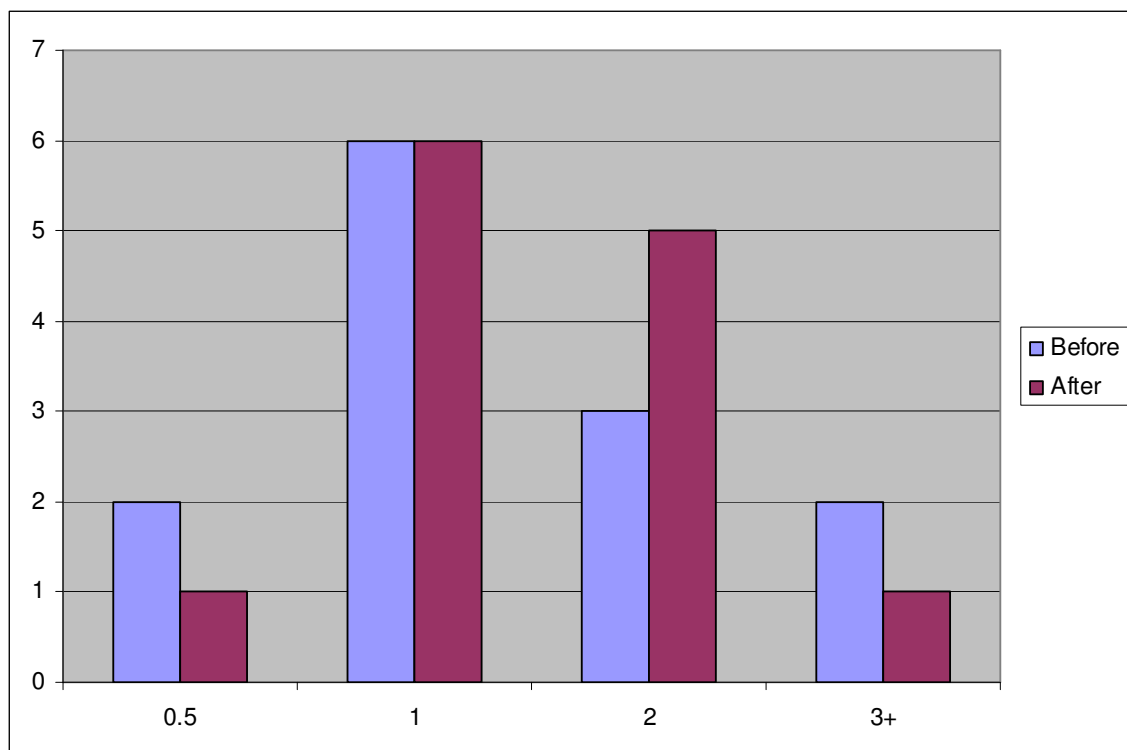


Fig. 1. Homework Hours

Table compares the hours spent by each parent with their children on homework before and after the seminar.

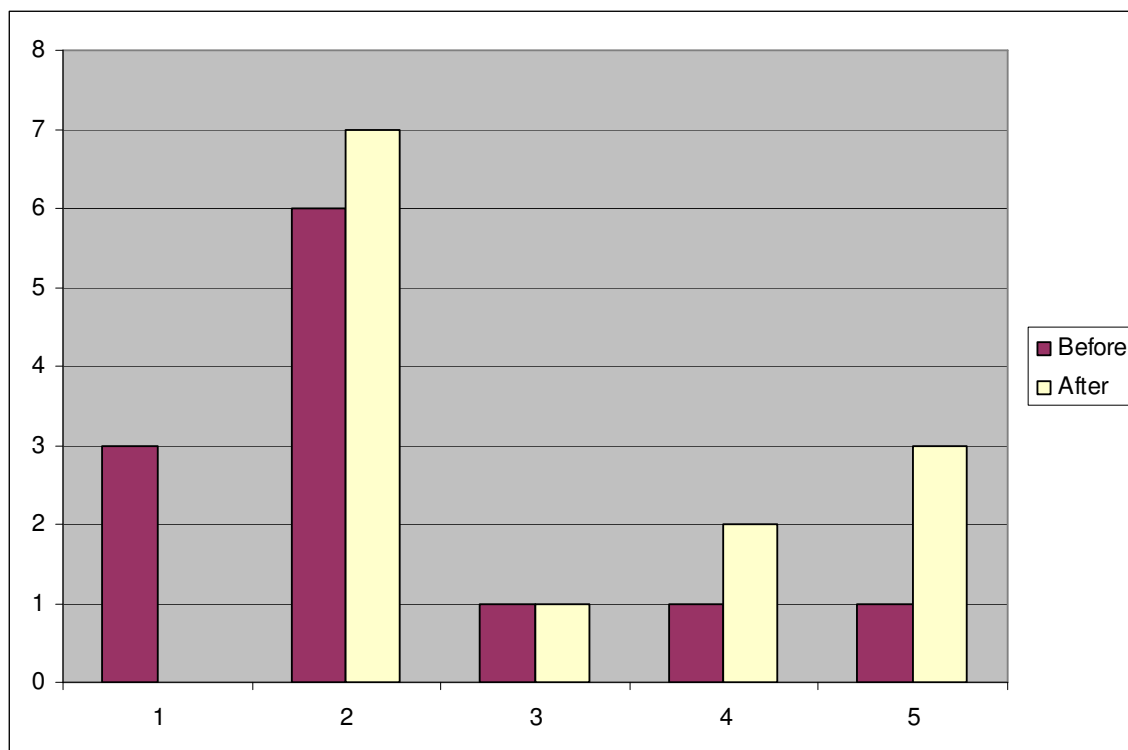


Fig. 2. Parental Visits to Classroom

Table compares the number of visits that parents made to their child's school per month before and after the seminar.

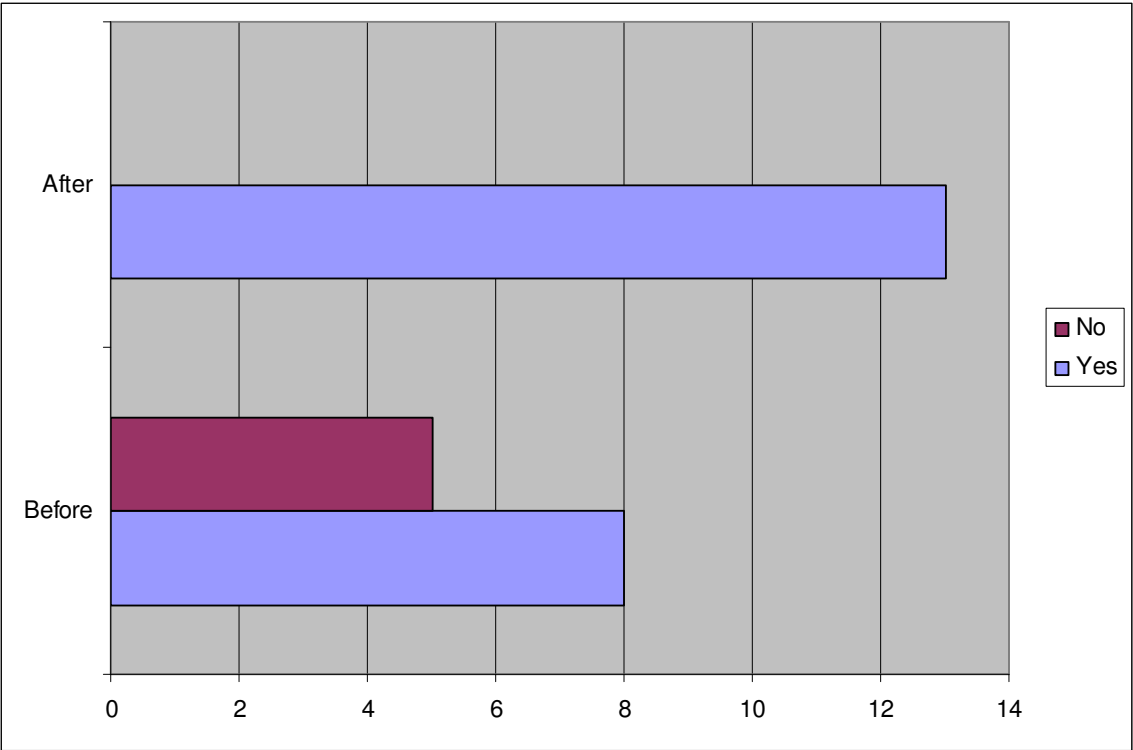


Fig. 3. Trips to Library

Table depicts the number of parents who had taken their children to the library before the seminar compared to those who took their children after the seminar.

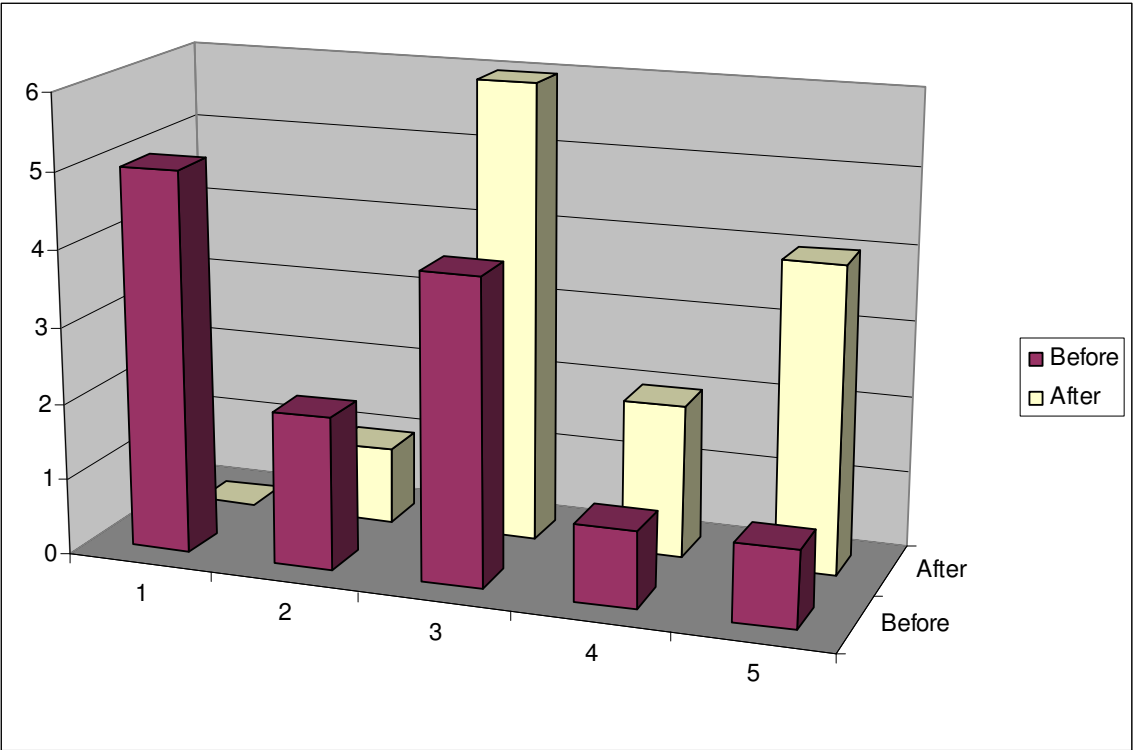


Fig. 4. Museum Trips

Table depicts the number of times parents had taken their children to the museum before the seminar compared to those who took their children after the seminar.

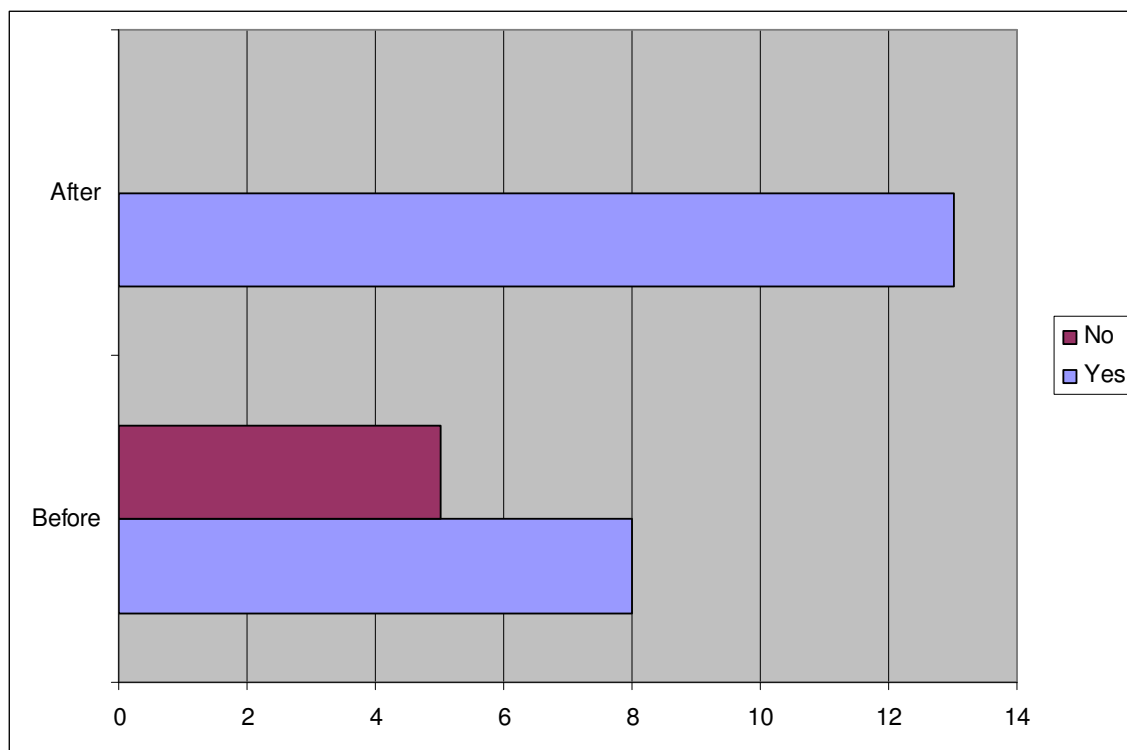


Fig. 5. Set Study Time

Table reflects parents who had set study time for their children before the seminar compared to those who had set study time after the seminar.

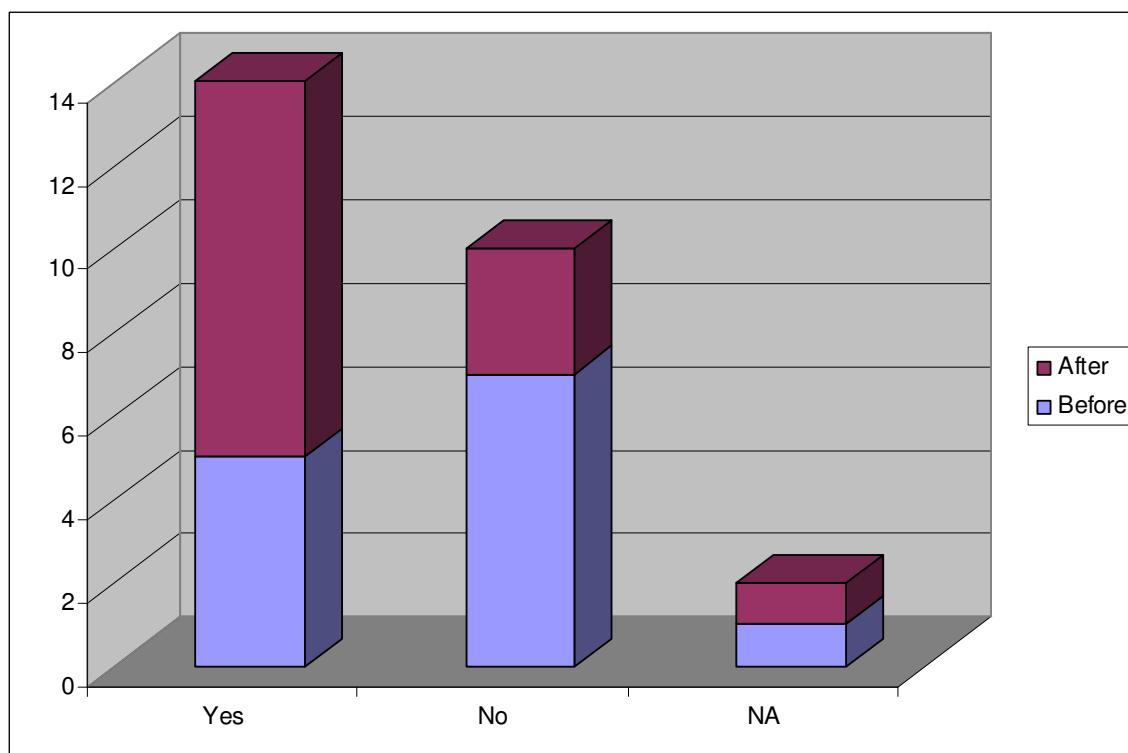


Fig. 6. Television Limits

Table reflects the number of parents who had established hours for their child to watch television prior to the seminar compared to after the seminar.

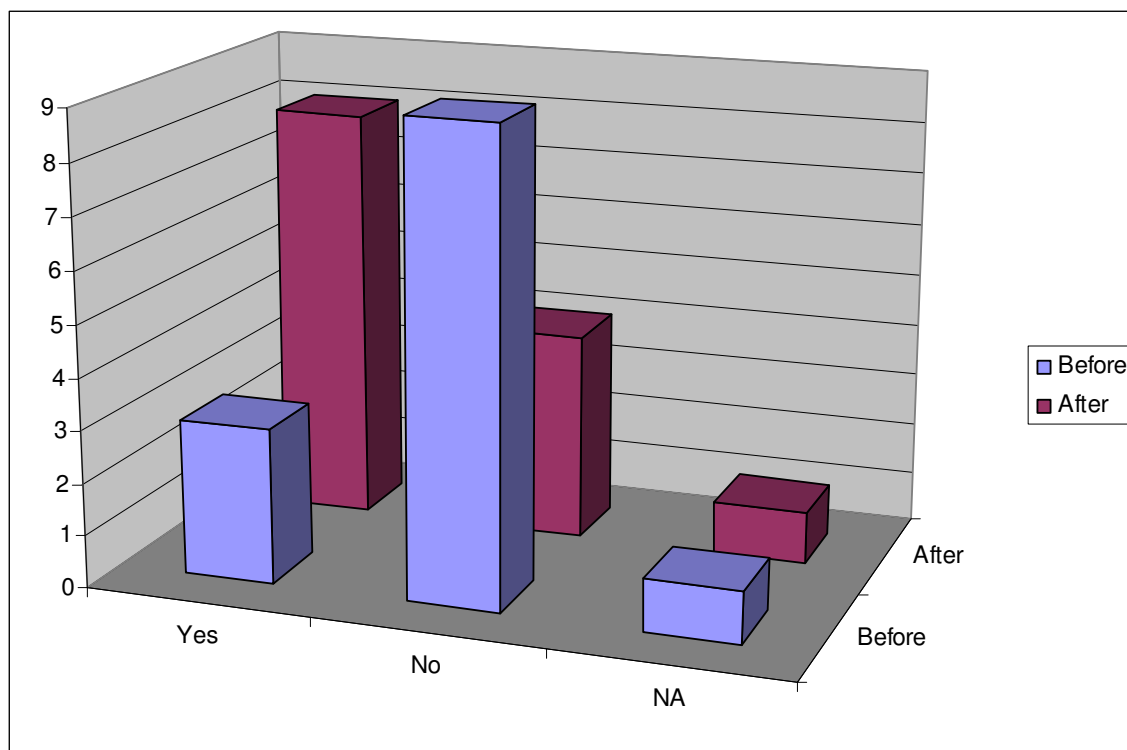


Fig. 7. PTA Participation

Table reflects the number of parents that participated in PTA prior to the seminar compared to those that participated in PTA after the seminar.

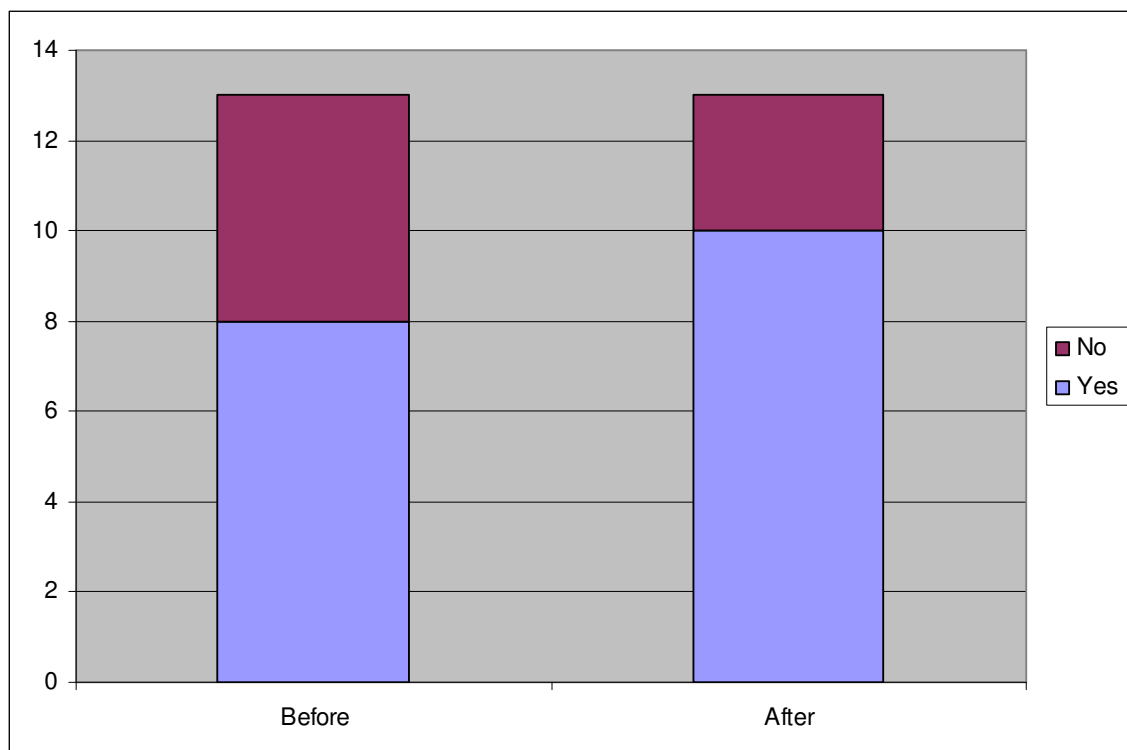


Fig. 8. Field Trip Volunteers

Table shows the number of parents that volunteered for their child's field trips prior to the seminar compared to the number of parents that volunteered after the seminar.

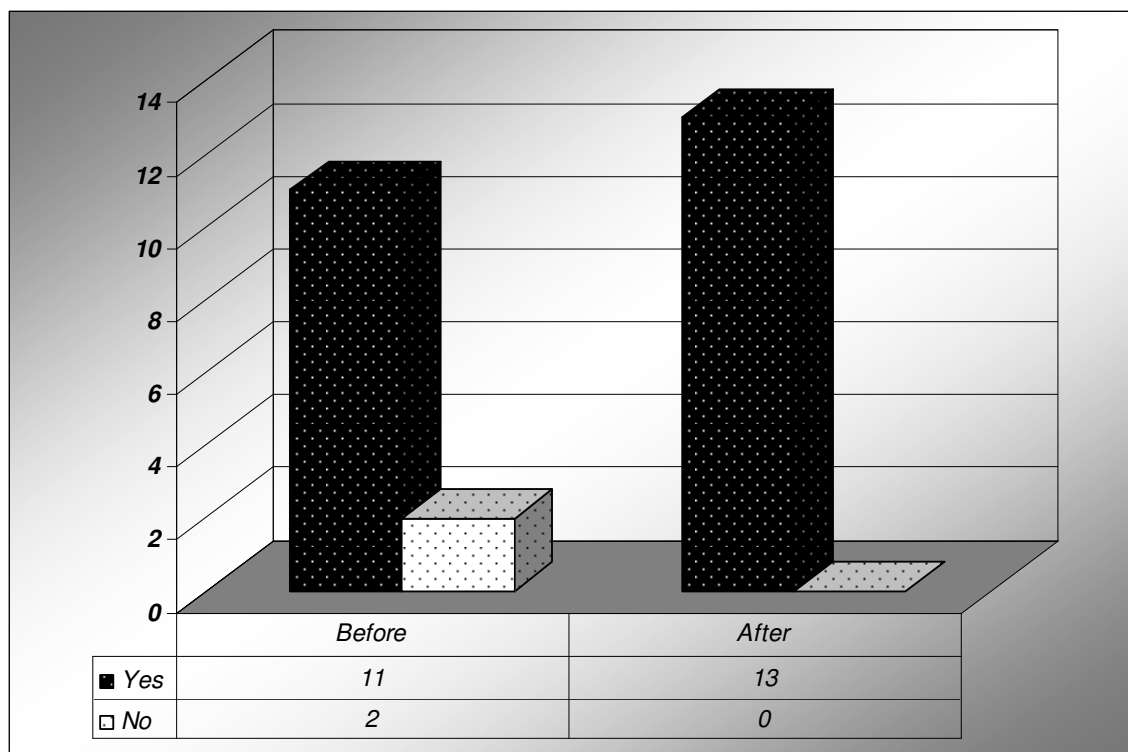


Fig. 9. Enforcing Bedtime

Diagram depicts the number of parents that enforced a designated bedtime for their children prior to the seminar compared to those that enforced a designated bedtime after the seminar.

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